

STORIES AFTER NATURE.

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STORIES AFTER NATURE.

BY CHARLES WELLS.

WITH A PREFACE BY W. J. LINTON.



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PREFACE.

O early as 1817, the date given by Mr. Buxton Forman, a sonnet by Keats was addressed "to a friend who sent me some roses," and in the sonnet the name given was Wells. This sonnet, writes Mr. Swinburne, "remains almost the only indication extant, unless the two or three yet fainter references to be found in the published correspondence of Keats be admitted as further evidence," of the personality of the author of *Stories after Nature* and the drama of *Joseph and his Brethren*.

The flower-present seems to indicate close friendship or companionship between Keats and Wells. Independently of this, I know

not how I became impressed with the idea that the two were intimate, and so closely associated that the drama was written in a sort of rivalry and proud feeling of competition with Keats. I may have learned something of this from two other poets, R. H. Horne and Thomas Wade, with both of whom in young days I was well acquainted (Wade indeed my brother-in-law). These two, Horne and Wade, like Wells, and like Reynolds and Darley and Beddoes and W. B. Scott and others, yet stand among the "inheritors of unfulfilled renown." Wade was the author of a considerable volume of poems, *Mundi et Cordis Carmina*, published in 1835; and in 1837 Moxon brought out, as the beginning of an intended new volume, a sheet of fourteen verse-pages, the *Contention of Death and Love*, in which I again found the name of Wells—

"Whose genius sleeps for his applause,"
with the following note :

"The name of Wells illustrates this Lyric.

That it should be needful here to state that Mr. Wells is the author of a great poem in the dramatic form, entitled *Joseph and his Brethren*, and published many years since, is a disgrace to our best and leading reviewers Of the noble poem of Mr. Wells one personally but a stranger to him can say, with a fervid conviction of the truth of his assertion, that to go from the *Paradise Lost*, the *Samson Agonistes*, the *Antony and Cleopatra*, to not few passages and scenes of *Joseph and his Brethren*, is but to sail in spirit down one and the same stream of sublime, subtle, and unsurpassed poetry."

So I came to know of Charles Wells. Here however of *Joseph and his Brethren* I have not to speak, and Mr. Swinburne's prefatory note, to the reprint of the drama in 1876, leaves no occasion for words of supplementary admiration. My business is with the *Stories after Nature*, a more important book than is suggested by Mr. Swinburne's description of it as "a puny

volume, barely heavier than a pamphlet," for although in small 12mo, it occupies no fewer than two hundred and fifty-one pages. This volume, published anonymously in 1822 (the year after Keats' death) by T. and J. Allman, Princes Street, Hanover Square, and C. and J. Ollier, Vere Street, Oxford Street, I picked off a book-stall nearly fifty years ago, in 1842, the only copy I have ever seen. Certainly I had found a treasure, which, shown to others, not I alone appreciated and admired. Dante Rossetti, to whom I lent it, was minded to illustrate some of the Stories, to be engraved by me for a promised reprint, an intention which we had not the fortune to carry out. Rossetti, I believe, brought the book to the notice of Swinburne, whose criticism (not all, I think, acceptable), ~~in~~ the prefatory note already referred to, is worthy of attention, and quoting at some length. He writes :

"The first publication of Mr. Wells, written, it is said, in his earliest youth, has

much of the charm and something of the weakness natural to the first note of a song-bird whose wings have yet to grow and whose notes have yet to deepen; yet in its first flutterings and twitterings there is a nameless grace, a beauty undefinable, which belongs only to the infancy of genius as it belongs only to the infancy of life. To a reader of the age at which this book was written it will seem—or so at least it seemed to me—‘perfect in grace and power, tender and exquisite in choice of language, full of a noble and masculine delicacy in feeling and purpose’; and he will be ready to attribute the utter neglect which has befallen it simply ‘to the imbecile caprice of hazard and opinion.’ Even then, however, he will perceive, if there be in him any critical judgment or any promise of such faculty to come, that the style of these stories is too near poetry to be really praiseworthy as prose; that they halt between two kinds of merit. At times they will seem to him almost to attain the

standard of the *Decameron* ; yet even he will remark that they want the direct aim and clear comprehension of story which are never wanting in Boccacio And the youngest reader will probably take note that 'there is a savour of impossibility (so to speak), a sort of incongruous beauty dividing the subject and the style, which removes the *Stories after Nature* from our complete apprehension, and baffles the reader's delight in them,' that 'even the license of a fairy tale is here abruptly leapt over ; names and places are thrust in which perplex the very readiest belief even of that factitious kind which we may accord to things practically impossible : English kings and Tuscan dukes occupy the place reserved in the charity of our imaginations for kings of Lyonesse and princesses of Garba ; the language also is often cast in the mould of Elizabethan convention ; absolute Euphuism, with all its fantastic corruption of style, breaks out and runs rampant here and there ; especially in a few of

- the more passionate speeches, this starched ugliness of ruff and rebato will be felt to stiffen and deform the style of the same
- page which contains some of the sweetest and purest English ever written.' On taking up the little book again in after years, he will also discern the perceptible influence of Leigh Hunt in some of the stories." . . .

There is much truth in this criticism, though it seems strange for a poet to object to poetic prose which, however youthful, is choice and dignified, a not unworthy setting of the nobility of thought and feeling which characterises the whole book. One may also forgive the occasional Euphuism for sake of the earnestness and real passion. Shakspeare himself will not escape rebuke if the charity of our imaginations cannot tolerate Wells' English kings and Tuscan dukes in the place of "kings of Lyonesse and princesses of Garba." We do not quarrel with the sea-coast of Bohemia, nor mind anachronisms in *Cymbeline* or a *Win-*

ter's Tale ; nor are we much shocked at even the absurdities of the *Gesta Romanorum*. I have again read these delightful Stories, nearly fifty years since my first reading of them ; and I own to reading them with the same pleasure and admiration as at first, finding them, notwithstanding their youthfulness and inequalities, true Stories after Nature, sincerely natural, fraught with Nature's own simple truth and most healthful teaching. As Mr. Swinburne further remarks in a too depreciatory tone, Leigh Hunt's influence may be seen ; but I think that most generous of critics would not have set any of them down as "somewhat thin and empty," but have rejoiced in their fresh luxuriance, and recognized in the writer a worthy follower and comrade. Strange indeed it seems that he, so wide and so appreciative a reader, the friend also of Keats, has not, that I can recollect, anywhere expressed even an opinion of Wells' prose or poetry !

In 1845 I was engaged on two magazines,

illustrated and of similar literary character—the *Illustrated Family Journal* and the *Illuminated Magazine*, of which last I succeeded to Douglas Jerrold as editor. I could find no better material, whether as stories or as fit for illustration, than these Stories so lately come into my possession; and I printed some seven or eight of them, with designs by the younger Pickersgill. I think it was through the son of Hazlitt (the critic and essayist) that these reprints came to the knowledge of Wells, then living idly in Brittany. He wrote to thank me, and sent me in manuscript two other tales that had not been printed: *Claribel* (here added to the 1822 series), which I was very glad to use, and a second, which seemed to me not suitable for the magazine, and which I returned to him. I have always been sorry for not having printed it, it was so powerfully written. a ghastly tale of revenge, the revenge of a man who, trapping his wife with a lover, fastened them into their room and left them to starve, years afterward

unsealing the room that he might look upon their remains.

Once I saw Wells. He was for a few days in London, and came to see me at Woodford, on Hainault Forest edge, where I then lived. There were two coaches to Woodford for the eight miles from town. By the first, one Sunday morning, came David Scott, the great Scottish painter, the brother of my life-long friend William Bell Scott, so lately dead ; by the second came an unexpected visitor, a stranger, a small weather-worn, wiry man, looking like a sportsman or fox-hunter. This was Charles Wells. He had been a great sportsman during a residence of many years in the north of France. The two men spent the day with me, a notable day for me with two such guests, both so remarkable, and so widely unlike. I think I heard some years after that of Wells having joined the Romanist Church and being spoken of as a mesmerist or some sort of miracle performer ; and then of his going to live with a

son, an engineer at Marseilles, where, I believe, he died.¹

I may perhaps be allowed to close my prefatory gossip with the not often quoted sonnet by Keats, to the friend who sent him roses :

As late I rambled in the happy fields,
 What time the sky-lark shakes the tremulous dew
 From his lush clover covert ;—when anew
 Adventurous knights take up their dinted shields .
 I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,
 A fresh-blown musk-rose ; 'twas the first that threw
 Its sweets upon the summer : graceful it grew
 As is the wand that queen Titania wields.
 And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,
 I thought the garden rose it far excell'd :
 But when, O Wells ! thy roses came to me
 My sense with their deliciousness was spell'd ;
 Soft voices had they, that with tender plea
 Whisper'd of peace, and truth, and friendliness
 unquell'd.

1817.

[¹ Wells died at Marseilles, Feb. 17, 1879.]

S T O R I E S

A F T E R

N A T U R E.

To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of
ten thousand

HAMLET.

L O N D O N :

T. AND J. ALLMAN,
PRINCES STREET, HANOVER SQUARE; AND

C. AND J. OLLIER,
VERE STREET, OXFORD STREET

1822



JULIA AND LYSIUS.

IN Ravenna, an ancient city of Italy, was a certain judge of great wisdom and piety; much honoured, and enjoying the good esteem of his friends.

He had but one child, a daughter named Julia, of tender years, of the greatest beauty, and most delicately brought up.

It happened, that he took a secretary into his house, to dwell with him, and manage some part of the weighty public business that devolved upon him. This youth's name was Lysius, a scholar; and, at bottom, of the deepest feeling. Julia no sooner saw him than she loved him, and laid her beauty at his feet; and being of a sensitive and delicate nature, and continually in his company, her colour faded, and her deep yearnings of affection touched every thought with melancholy.* Lysius liked her as a beautiful woman, but was indifferent to the delicacy of

her affection ; so that she was continually looking on a blank.

Her father, seeing her health thus decline, began to cast often for the cause ; and at length, going into her bedchamber one morning, as she lay awake, he took her hand between his, and said, " My dear daughter, I have long forborne, from great delicacy, to question you of the cause of this your sickness of mind ; but so does it affect me, that I find I cannot go about my daily occupations, and leave you so sorely afflicted, without offering what consolation I can to you. My child, thy peace is as precious to me as my life ; nevertheless, I know you to be mistress of so delicate a sense, that if you feel disinclined to impart to me your thoughts, do not do it ; and I will take more patience to myself, till time, that healeth all wounds, shall have fulfilled the will of Heaven on thy desires." Julia was silent, and hung down her head ; but presently, bursting into tears, she hid her face in his bosom, saying " Father, my heart is almost broken." He began to sooth and comfort her ; when she looked up, and told him of her affection. And he said, " Heaven is above these things. I will not be thy father so much in authority as in friendliness. To-morrow we will talk of this matter." But she answered eagerly, " Now—I prythee now. I can

bear anything now, but have no fortitude for to-morrow. Counsel me what I am to do." And her father said, "The truth is best to be told in these matters. Hitherto thy happiness has been in my hands, and thou hast been happy; but now it goes from me. I think thy passion is foremost: I do not think this youth loves you, and it is not delicate in us to ask him in marriage." Julia began weeping afresh, and said, "In matters of this nature we may sometimes break through the common laws. I think I could ask him to marry me." Her father, seeing her thus bent on it, kissed her, and said, "Though his fortunes are most mean compared to thine, and his estate low; yet, if he like it, you shall be his wife: and if he take thee, I pray that he may grow into that passion for thee that thy tender nature deserves. I will send messengers to say I cannot attend the court to-day, and will go about this thing; I shall do all for the best, so I hope you will contrive in the meanwhile to be somewhat comfortable." And kissing her, and blessing her, he went from her chamber. The great kindness of Julia's father wrought upon her heart; and the sudden hope that she was willing to entertain, arising from despair, thrilled her with an ecstasy, that was but seldom damped with the sad thought of failure.

Her father went into the garden, and walked some time, thinking ; then, sending for Lysius, he led him into a chamber, and sitting opposite to him, he told him of his daughter's passion, and his willingness to lay good fortune on him ; but to ponder on it, and have a care that he did not by future neglect waste his child's life. And, for all the severity of his speech, a tear stood in his eye. Lysius answered, " Sir, if I were insensible to the beauty of your child, I must be more than stone ; but affection is a matter of deep birth, and cannot be called up of one's own accord. I do more honour your daughter than love her ; but considering my poorness of fortune, and the good estate I shall receive at your hands, I will so far bind myself as to marry your daughter, and will do all in my power to behave virtuously towards her ; teaching myself (if it may so be) continual lessons of affection, so that in time I may perhaps fully answer her passion : but this is in the hands of fate. I will at all hazards treat her delicately and honourably." The old man hearing this, approving of his open manner of speech, and the confession of his feelings, embraced him ; and went instantly to his daughter, and told her of what had passed, than which nothing more could rejoice her ; so that she despised her bed, and

arose, and went into the air. Lysius seeing her walking in the garden, came to her, and kissed her, and began to converse with her. All was bustle and merriment, and in a week every thing was ready for the marriage.

It happened that Lysius, who was highly related in Athens, received word suddenly, saying, that the two youths who stood in his way to an immense estate had fallen in a quarrel by each other's hands, and were dead ; and inviting him to come and take possession of his riches. Now when Lysius heard this, he bethought him how he should act ; first inquiring the truth of this matter, and finding it correct, he went to the apartment of the judge, and spoke to him as follows. "The news that I have to tell you at once grieves and rejoices me. When I said I would marry your daughter, I was a beggar. I told you that I did not love her ; but considering the good estate I should arrive to, and her passion, I was willing to take her on such conditions, which are now altered, leaving only her passion ; for I am a lord, and master of immense revenues. I purpose to lead the life of a wealthy man ; and being a great admirer of woman's beauty, and my affections free, I cannot now bind myself to the benefit of her passion alone." After a pause, the judge said,

"I am afraid my daughter will die in consequence." Lysius replied, "It grieves me; but we must part here." So saying, he took horse and went to Athens.

Now when Julia's father told this, she stifled much of her grief, seeing his great pain for her; called to aid an independence of spirit, and for some time made a desperate head against her affliction: stifling her tears and sighs, and groaning but seldom, and in secret, at her hard fate. But her father saw what was passing in her heart, and was miserable. The days and nights proved too long for her, and she went mad for many months. She sat half in her grave, and half out; and it was the falling of an autumnal leaf whether she lived or died. But the violence of the fever abating, her senses gradually returned. As nature mouldeth to its sweetest shape after a wasteful storm, so she gathered her reason, and, because of her father, made great efforts towards her peace. Three years passed over her head, yet she was nothing altered; save in declining to her last bed by fast degrees.

Her father, seeking by all means to amuse her mind, had built a cell behind a buttress close where he held his seat in the court of justice, and provided it with curtains, so that she could see and hear all that passed of interest, without

being herself perceived. It happened, that one morning, Julia being present, a man in tattered apparel, with a staff in his hand, and like a beggar, was brought before them on the charge of murder. No one knew aught of him, or who he was, nor would he describe himself; but Julia's sense was quick, and she knew him to be Lysius: and holding her forehead for some minutes, she departed from the court.

Lysius having come to his estate, had joined the noisy and luxurious youth of Athens; and never thinking that wells may be drawn dry, he went on scattering his money on one worthless banquet and another, till his lands were gaged, his coffers empty, and he obliged to fly for fear of imprisonment for heavy debts. And here he stood, in this deplorable condition, before Julia's father, to answer to the crime of murder. Although he avowed his innocence, yet circumstances were so clear against him, and fortune was so much his enemy, that every body adjudged him guilty, and he was doomed to death at the sunset of that day. Now when Julia left the court, she beat with her hand upon her heart, and, collecting all her firmness, went into the garden and gathered berries, with which she dyed her face and neck; and tying her hair in knots, and clothing herself in ragged apparel like

a wandering beggar, she made her way through the press in the court, just as Lysius was being carried away to prison ; and, standing up before her father, she said, " Hold, you man of justice, truly blind ; you know not what you do ! What poor things, ye gods ! are mortals in your eyes, if the gravest of us thus play with each other's lives. Be it known unto you this man is innocent. I slew him who is dead, and confess myself guilty of the murder : my motive was jealousy ; his crime, neglect of me. Set him free, I pray you : and, O ye gods, take of me the weary life that I have held so long, nor ever dreamt of using it as I now do." It now being the close of the court, and the judges having some difference in this affair, suspended the execution ; and ordered, that early in the morning they should appear before them to pass sentence on the woman and release the accused ; so they were both conveyed out, and put into two dungeons. Now Julia, feeling for her father, and to put him off his guard from discovering her, had written to him, saying, " If I do not return to-night, consider me safe and happy." So that he felt no alarm, having full confidence in her ; and was inwardly glad that she showed an inclination for any thing. When the morning came, sentence was taken off Lysius, and passed

upon her by her own father, who condemned her to present death.

• But fate was fickle in this, and would not permit it ; for the man who appeared slain, after long seeming dead, showed some signs of animation ; and he found his senses, and voice enough to accuse his murderers ; who, being apprehended, confessed their crime, and the whole of them had just come into court. The judges were amazed at this matter, as also was Lysius ; and they said, “ Woman, why hast thou deceived us, and thus cast thy life at fortune ? Albeit thou hast saved the life of a fellow being, we understand it not.” She replied, “ Stifle your amazement. The gods are above. We two are declared innocent. I know not why, my soul, but I ~~have~~ ^{have} some hope.” Saying this, she took ~~Lysius’s~~ ^{Lysius’s} hand and kissed it, and a tear fell on it ; so she departed. When she touched him he trembled like a child (for he knew her), but was dumb with remorse and wonder. After this time Julia became more peaceful, seeing she had saved her lover’s life.

Now away went Lysius into Athens, full of love and affection for Julia ; wondering at himself and the greatness of her act. He came to his steward, gathered his books together, and worked from light till dark ; beginning at the

peep of morning, and closing only at the shut of day. He examined his accounts, closed with those to whom he owed money; and was red with shame, and shuddered at the wreck of fortune he had strewn upon so barren a strand, while such a woman as Julia would lay down her life for him, though ruined, and a beggar. In the course of one year he had gathered money enough from his former waste to provide for the present in splendour. So he went from Athens like a prince, with choice youth about him, with music and banners, followers, and horsemen habited in gold and silver apparel, bearing gifts; and, coming to Ravenna, he went to Julia's house, and embraced her father. When she came into the hall she wondered who this stranger might be; but when he fell at her feet, thanking her for his life, asked pardon for the past, and besought her hand, she shouted, and fainted in his arms.


They were married the next day, and lived only for each other; their happiness increasing with their wealth and family.





CHRISTIAN AND HIS COMPANIONS;

OR, PATRIOTISM AND LIBERTY.

 HERE was an old king of Norway, who, though he came to the throne late in life, brought with him none of that discretion which should belong to maturity of age ; but only great tyranny, and a violent will.

There were three young noblemen of his kingdom, of great fortunes and independence, named Christian, Gustavus, and Frederick ; who often conversed together in private of the disgusting practices of the old king, and of his unwholesome government.

It happened, that after having reigned two years his extravagancies became so great, that he levied a heavy and burthensome tax upon his people ; insomuch that they murmured, and

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were out of heart, saying, "Why should we sweat thus in our affairs? The more we get, the more is taken away from us ; they let us live only that we may surfeit them." All confidence in dealing, all energy and industry were gone.

These three noblemen were walking in a garden, talking on the hated subject of the king's tyranny and the people's sufferings, when Christian, the greatest of them, proposed that they should risk their lives and become the champions of the liberties of the people ; that they should sell their vast estates and lands, and convert them into money to obtain arms, etc., for the sustenance of troops. So they departed to consider of the matter, agreeing to meet each other on the following day in that place, and swear an oath. Having thought of the thing, and being fully resolved, feeling enthusiastically the virtue of the cause, they met before the appointed time in the garden, and there swore never to desert each other, or the cause of liberty which they had espoused ; nor take any steps without the full consent of all three. Having knelt down and taken this oath on their swords, they parted to gather their fortunes into a heap, and strengthen themselves amongst those who hated, but feared the government. They all found the love of the

people was equal to the hatred of the monarch, for the same cause had produced both. They had for a long time provided their families with bread, and fed the rapacity of power by paying its burthensome demands upon them; the time however was now come when they were to effect a change.

They retreated from the city to the mountains; and there, suddenly hoisting a standard, gave hopes to all who would come to them. At the first their numbers were many; though not one third of what they should have been; for the poor-hearted, having no faith in their cause (though knowing it honest), would not join them, for fear of the king. They, wisely seeing that something must be done, came down from the mountains and gave the king battle; after a bloody fight they won it, beating the king unto his very gates.

It was now that the true dispositions of men appeared; for no sooner had they gained this victory, than those who were before tame, became as wild as wolves; and those who were afraid, were mad with valour in their cause.

The tyrant, fearing they would besiege him within his walls, hastened to try once again his fortune in the field. A second battle was fought, but with doubtful success, for night

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had closed upon the scene of action, and forced a retreat.

It happened that Gustavus, who with a chosen number had penetrated to the gates of the city, determined upon entering it; and, having cut their way through, they flew to the senate house, supposing the council would be sitting to advise in their exigencies. In this they were not mistaken: there they found the old retainers of the king—the feed bloodsuckers of their country—the seals to tyranny—the vouchers and abettors of all wrongs; and there without mercy they hacked them to death, so that the blood poured through the crevices into the street. Having done this, they broke through into the great garden, past the palace, into the plain; thus avoiding any further encounter. Gustavus, however, did not return as he had come—it had been well for him if he had. In passing the palace he made prize of the youngest daughter of the king, and carried her off with two of her women; marching through the vallies till they had gained the main army. Both parties being sufferers thought it wise to retreat for some time.

The lady whom Gustavus had taken, though young, was artful in the extreme; and she, wishing well to the government, and ill to the

faction, pretended to fall violently in love with him, and yielded to his pleasure ; seeking every means to loosen the firmness of his mind, and to make herself the sole object of his thoughts. This she accomplished, like a true woman ; so that Gustavus began to show marks of despondence and strangeness of manners before his two friends. The princess was suddenly missed, and it was rumoured that she and her maids had escaped. The truth, however, soon appeared ; which was, that Gustavus had turned traitor, and had sent her to her father with a promise to join him. Gustavus at first thought of persuading his comrades to a peace, but a little reflection soon convinced him of the impracticability of such a scheme. It came at length to this point ; whether he would sacrifice the cause of liberty or his affection for this woman : the trifle prevailed, and the great weight rose in the scale.

Soon after her flight, the king's party showed signs of active preparation for battle, for the eagerness of which none could account but Gustavus. Measures were taken to meet them ; and when both parties had fronted each other, and paused for the word of attack, Gustavus drew off his troops, and making a circuit round a hill fell suddenly into the king's ranks, and

faced upon his friends. Christian and Frederick looked on each other amazed, and Christian said sorrowfully, "We are no longer the crescent three." Frederick turned furiously round, and made an attack upon the part where Gustavus was stationed; and having left the main battle to Christian, he with an hundred chosen men chased Gustavus up and down the ranks, cleaving his way through every opposition, till he had secured him and taken him prisoner. Christian, seeing a favourable opportunity, found it prudent to sound a retreat; having sustained but little loss, and disabled the king's troops too much to follow him. In the morning they assembled and sat in judgment upon their prisoner; who, by this time, had come to a full sense of his dishonour, and desired nothing so much as to die, and end at once his misery, and the mean opinion he had of himself. When he was brought before them, he stood with much humility and unaffected sorrow; never lifting his eyes from the ground, or shifting his melancholy position. Christian spoke, saying, "What are we to do with thee? Thou hast deserved the death for sacrificing thine honour to thine inclination; for abandoning the sacred cause of liberty and the people; and (worst of all) abetting their fast enemy.

Thy fault is great ; but thou hast been so long my brother and fellow counsellor in the ways of honesty, that I cannot stop thy breath. What you have done in our affairs has been done with a full heart ; and what you now feel, I am well assured, is felt with a full heart—that is, that you have lost your honour, and the blessed hope of bestowing liberty to your fellow men. What you did was through the infatuation of that bad woman : it was weak, and we cannot again trust you in our great cause. What are we to do with you ?” Frederick immediately answered, saying, “There is but one thing to be done. We swore an oath, which oath was to be our judgment ; and it sentences this traitor to death. Is it not merited ? But for the aid of heaven, we had, through his treachery, been sacrificed to our enemies ; and, for our blind confidence in his hollow faith, have died a death most beastly, under the steeds of our enemies. His life is forfeited to every soldier here—chiefly to you and me—and I demand it in all justice of you.” Christian replied, “You have spoken the truth ; but there is one thing greater than revenge, and hand-friend to our cause—it is mercy. Let him live : we can spare him and all who are traitors. His cause (which was his armour) and his power being gone, he is become

weak as a naked sworder. If you will be revenged, let him be sent forth in a burnished car, decked in a purple vest and garlanded, with chains upon his wrists, to his new master the great king ; and let his dishonourable wife take him to her arms, and pay him for his loss of peace and honour with a kiss : then he may work for the king. I fear no harm that he can do us ; once known, the faith is broke. This is enough for all thy great revenge, and better than his blood. Seek not his life ; I pray thee, let him live." But Frederick was boisterous, and demanded his life, and would by no means listen to the feelings of Christian ; saying, he would act no farther in the cause if every article was not obeyed ; so that Christian, finding he was not to be pacified, agreed to draw lots with him, which should have the disposal of the prisoner. Humanity was repulsed ; for Frederick won it, and condemned him to death, swearing an oath that he should die. Christian, finding nothing would prevail upon him to relinquish his design, came down, and folding his arms about Gustavus, embraced him, saying, "Care not, we are parted but for a little time. I will be always anxious to do more than I have done, as being mindful of the sorrow you feel at having left undone so much. You see I

cannot help your fate, but I am sorry. I now embrace you for the last time—you have been, and might be noble, what you are I shall ever forget.” After a pause he added, “Will nothing save his life?” Frederick sternly answered, “No, nothing.” So they parted, both shedding tears. When Gustavus had recovered his voice, he said firmly, and in a manly tone, “Ye neither of you know me. That I am so mean in the opinions of my honourable companions is much, very much: but that I am so mean in my own is more. I am mad to think of what I have lost: I am glad that I am overtaken in my crime. Be it known to you, lord Frederick, that in some senses you are the poorest of the two; for you are proud to wrench from humanity that which I loathe, and shall throw by. I know not why, but I feel you are out of my memory. I regret not to leave you, and hardly seem to have done you an offence. But to the greater and gentle Christian what can I say? Never enough—never half. I feel my heart aches, and thus will I be peevishly revenged upon it—I will whisper thy name, and it shall usher me to heaven.” So saying, he stabbed himself to the heart, and fell on his back, dead. When Christian saw this he ordered his soldiers to take him

away, and he buried him, and mourned for him sincerely.

The king, finding he had gained nothing by this move (by which he had expected to gain everything), became more wary and cautious; and endeavoured to recruit himself by ceasing to provoke hostilities. The patriot captains finding this, began to plan some measure for assaulting the city and carrying it by storm; in consequence of which, Frederick undertook with a body of chosen men to go out, with an intention to discover the state and power of the enemy's outposts. This adventure he performed successfully the first time; but on the second, other fortune awaited him. The king's scouts having discovered his first attempt, alarmed the captain of the guard; but he was then too weak to attack men, whom he knew would fight desperately; and moreover he judged, that by keeping close in the bushes and the fern, where they were in ambush, and suffering them to return unalarmed, they would make an excursion of the same nature, when he would be better provided to repulse them. In this he was right; and having set a spy upon a hill, he waited patiently for the signal of their approach; which, when he saw, he ordered his men to fall flat upon their faces amongst the

heath. As soon as Frederick and his men were passed in silence and supposed security, they rose up quietly, with a staunch arrow in each bow, and discharged upon them with a horrid shout; and many a brave fellow fell, wounded in the back. They turned, however, as savage as wolves, and fought a bloody battle with their enemies, who were ten times their number; but the valour of Frederick was a host in itself, and he ever cheered on his men with enthusiastic shouts of liberty. Although his numbers were so great, the captain of the guard began to doubt the issue of the fight; and to put more spirit in his men, promised them each a piece of gold if they were conquerors. This did much, but Frederick and his fellows fought till every man lay stretched amongst the grass; most of them hacked to death, and but a few wounded. Frederick had received three wounds, and having fainted from loss of blood, they took him prisoner, and carried him into the city with the poor remnant of his men, and there cast him in prison, till he should be cured or die.

Christian waited in his fastness with painful impatience for the return of his friend and colleague, and at last summoned a troop of horse and went in search of him. When he came upon the field of battle the cause of this delay

was fully explained. There the condition of each man spoke for their valour, insomuch that Christian muttered, "They have fallen as we would trim a tree, joint by joint. Dost thou behold, thou placid heaven? Their cause was liberty. If any be thy children, these are they—large-hearted, noble fellows." The glorious zeal he felt burning in his bosom gave way to wonder and amazement at the number of the enemy that lay dead. Soon, however, he thought upon Frederick, and hoping yet to find some life in him, went anxiously searching but could not find him; still thinking that he never would be taken by the enemy alive, he was about to order a second search, when one who was wounded told what had happened to Frederick. Christian said, "They must know that he cannot be spared." And having collected all the wounded of friends and enemies, they retreated to their camp. •

Christian now began to think industriously, and to study with all diligence, desire, and patience, what was to be done; strengthening his heart to do for the best, having lost his two friends, and determining to fight it out till his last breath. After mature thinking, having taken the sense of the wisest men of his army, he determined to raise all the power he could,

attack the city at all its gates with fire and sword, and thus burn out the tyrant and his horde: moreover he had a secret cause in his heart, which was to gain (if possible) the liberty of his fellow in arms. This measure took some time to execute, but when his army was formed, judiciously disposed, and the plan of attack nearly completed, he received news, that Frederick had accepted a title and station under the king. This he could hardly credit, especially when he thought upon the death of Gustavus.

The fact was this: when Frederick had recovered from his wounds, he had nothing to expect but present death, all ransom being refused. The king, who judged (and in some measure rightly), that the love of liberty in those out of office is another name for the love of power, thought it prudent to tempt Frederick, and if possible to win him to his interest. Not that he would benefit himself much by it, but that it would eat into the heart of Christian, and shake the confidence of his troops. Restless ambition, joined to a severe and ferocious disposition, with the love of power (not the love of honour), were the prevailing features of Frederick's mind; so that, not having the courage to die, he renounced his faith, and took his seat by the king's chair.

Christian credited this for truth ; but thought secretly, that Frederick had done it through craft, and to win time, that he might by some means escape and again join him. There appearing, however, great mystery, he was perplexed how to proceed ; but at length determined to alter his plan, and delay the time of attack till he had been himself into the city, and found the truth of the matter. Disguising himself, therefore, in the habit of a slave, and providing for his absence as well as he could, he left the camp under the best direction in his power, and made for the city. There he offered himself to serve in the king's army, took their cloak and habit, and by this means gained admission. This was no sooner done, than he gathered the truth respecting Frederick ; still thinking that he waited only for some chance to join him. When he arrived at his palace his joy was great. Here again taking the habit of a slave, he engaged himself as a servant. But his confidence was a little shaken when he saw with what heartless happiness he lived, and that he behaved to the king with smiling indifference, and not with a smothered hate. He brooded over the apparent truth continually, thinking on the death of Gustavus, and sweating with great wrath.

It was the custom of Frederick to walk in his garden secretly at noon. After three days, Christian, in full conviction, gave way to his vengeance; and watching Frederick till he was at the end of the avenue of the garden (where his guard could not hear him, and where he was free from interruption), came up to him and said, "I have long looked for this opportunity—know thou that thy happiness is complete. I am no slave, but a messenger disguised from the soldier Christian, to give thee hopes of deliverance, and afford means for thy flight secretly." Frederick bit his lips, and, folding his garment round him, said, "Slave, you mistake me; I am not of your faction." Christian struck him a violent blow on the mouth with the back of his hand, casting at him a look of loathing and disdain. They both drew their swords, and fought; Frederick smote madly, as if to justify his treachery; but Christian followed him on, blow for blow, with a most potent eye, and a secure confidence that doomed him to death. Having wounded Frederick in the throat, he struck him on the head and knocked him down; and, striding over him, waited to see if he was yet dead. When he was revived a little, Christian said to him, "Thou devil (or worse), be it known to thee, that the great cause

thou hast betrayed is its own avenger. Though thou hast deserted it, liberty, sweet liberty, shall be its own champion. It is a word to melt the crowns of tyrants yet: and for such petty worms as you, that eat their way into our human hearts, and take the life-blood smiling, her foot is on thee—her arm of vengeance can reach thee on thrones, or in palaces. Know me for Christian!" And he raised his arm to strike him; but Frederick called for mercy and pardon. Christian said, "Pardon thou hast, but mercy none—and yet a little—as much as thou didst give Gustavus. Art thou so mean a beast as to wish to live in thine own filth, a tyrant's engine of unholy wrath?—O fool! O fool! how worse than mad. What hast thou lost? Where are the shouts up from a thousand hearts made happy by shaking the dull leaves from overblown oppression? Where is the echo that high heaven would send in answer to that peal? Where is thy banner in the victory—thine oath—thine honour—and thy name in heaven? All gone. Would you yet wish to live? Where is thine hatred to a tyrant king? All turned to love—nay, worse, to callous nothing. Thyself remembering, but all else forgot that makes thee worth remembrance. I forget thee not. Poor worm, dost struggle? This for the cause of

liberty : this for the nobler Gustavus ; myself and heaven come last. So, now my sword hath supped, it shall to bed. Thou bloody picture ! —amen to thee !—henceforth I do forget thee " * So saying, he turned his back on him, and left him lying under the tree, dead. Returning to his army, he bethought him how he might best atone to his great cause for the falling off of another of its sworn leaders. As his difficulties increased, his love to the cause of the people became greater, and he grew more firm in its defence : determined on this one thing, setting his life at nothing. And all this was indeed needful.

He returned to his camp, full of anxiety, hope, and firmness ; and sending for his officers, he unfolded his mantle, and discovered himself. They no sooner saw him than they fell upon him, bound him, and gave him over to certain of his enemies who were at hand, and left him at their mercy. In vain he threatened and called for his guard, none answered ; they bore him, full of doubt and perplexity, back into the city, and cast him into a dungeon. Still his firm heart was not shaken at this mutiny of his captains ; and, rendering his cause into the hands of Heaven, he bethought him, vigilantly, by what means he could once more gain his liberty

to espouse it On looking round the prison, he saw three of his soldiers bound, and standing at his back ; and he said, " My fellows, how are you in this misfortune ? Tell me (if you know), how came we thus ? " They neither of them answered ; but, casting their eyes upon the ground, hung their heads in silence. When Christian pressed them further, one said to the other, " Do you tell the captain—my throat aches." And he, who was an old veteran, said, " My lord, you have heard my voice often thunder in the war ; but I have to tell a childish tale, unfit for a man's breast to send forth, or a man's ear to hear ; so I will suit it to the story. My eyes are wet, too, and fretted, for I spy nothing but ruin where I have seen honour. But enough of this. Oh, yet any thing rather than come to the matter ; but, as well as I may, with powers impaired with grief and shame, I'll tell it. Ope thine ears, and brace thy heart, for I will tell this tale but once, and to you only ; and, sooth, none will believe it. We four, here, are the greatest sacrifice that honour and a great cause ever registered : we are not man's soldiers now, but God's ; for man deserts us. I take the praise that is due to us, for it fills our hearts, without the help of the world. Captain, there is one thing called gold, and

another honour: when they go together, they are Heaven's champions; when not, they are enemies, and fight. The arch-fiend found his way into the camp, and, for a little, plucked the true hearts to his side; bought honour in, and the great seal upon the sweet bond of liberty stickled no longer for the point. Nay, less than coy, gave up at once, like a hot maid. Come, come, I will be plain. Thy officers (the devil burn them!) said to thy men (fierce fire consume them!), 'The king hath sent us gold, would fain be friends, and bring us to peace; hath sent us laws, signed by his proper hand, grants of land, and measures of corn in the hard season. Show this camp your shoulders; go, break your swords, or bend them into hooks; fall on your knees, and when our captain comes, I'll give him to the king to make you friends.' By heaven! these tall fellows all gave up at a wink, a god, and murdered precious liberty down in the dirt. But why do you weep? All piping? Captain, where's your tough heart now?—I'll lend my handkerchief; be quick, for 'tis in use. Aye, the devil, gold, and want of honour did it.—Damned be they all!" After a long pause, Christian said, "World! world! O world!"—and, looking on his fellows, asked why they were there: He who had spoken, re-

plied, laughing, "Fate will have his joke—I came to die." The second said, "The same. I have strained for one cause, and will crack in the losing on't. It was a good one ; I will be out of breath in it." The third said, "Ask me not, for we four brothers can understand by signs." Christian folded them each in his arms, and blessed them in the great name of liberty, saying, "This is all I can." When his mind was a little calmed, he fell to deliberation, hoping to find some means by which to lift his standard once more. In the evening he was carried before the king, who, having great judgment, was fully aware of the nobleness of Christian's nature, and designed to sport with him. He kept him standing like a groom, often looking upon him, without noticing him, and trifling with his courtiers in jest. At last he said, "Christian, as a rebel to your anointed king, you are doomed to death ; but, as I know thee, thou rare bird, I will save thee on one condition. Barely say that thou wilt live at peace with me, and no longer choke with thy valour my free way ; and I will come down, and with my own hands undo those chains." Christian replied (smiling with contempt), "Thou dost not know me, thou fool, or thou hadst not made so idle a request. Nay, no more talk ; despatch me in thy wrath. I tell

thee, if I had thee thus, I would cut thy throat." And the king said, "For what dost thou despise my grace?" "For a word, merely." "I must hear it." "Thou dardest not." "The word." "Liberty!" And they all four cried out "Liberty!" till the king in anger delivered them to the guard, when they went out shouting, so that all the assembly feared, and wondered at them. When they were gone, the king retired to feast, and caroused in joy at the end of the war.

Soon after the prisoners had got to their cell, a messenger came with the warrant of death sealed in his hand, and commanded the three others to leave Christian in his cell; so that these brave fellows were forced to part. They went away as if they had been going on a party of hawking, or some graceful pleasure, but with hearts puffed up to their ribs. As Christian heard the last whispers of their footfall pass the vault, tears started involuntarily to his eyes; yet he knew not despair, but was full of excessive feeling. He thought over all his battles, and felt proud at heart for having done greatly, and for the best, in all things: a happiness greater than any but himself could know. He, though the butt of all mischance, was great enough, in his own honour, to stride over fate; and thinking once more on the blessed cause he had

upheld, he grew fond (as is the way of people in distress); and, being full of poor thoughts for this world, played tricks in his imagination, fancying that he and his three comrades were dead, and wandering amongst the fields of Heaven, with the same honest faces, but free from care; and, so musing, he fell into a placid sleep.

If it is a joy to find a good man happy in this world, listen, and rejoice with me.

When midnight came he was awoke by low and melancholy singing in his ear, and raising his eyes he beheld a figure and face of heavenly beauty leaning over him. So strongly did this blend with his dream, that he was some time entranced, between sleep and wake, certainty and doubt; but when the hand of this beautiful woman fell upon his head, the vision of his dream was gone. She, sitting herself beside him, began, with actions full of grace, to comfort him, and bade him hope that he might live after sun-rise, for all the warrant of the king; while he, struck with the strangeness of the thing, sat looking and adoring by turns. Thus the time passed in pleasant converse; he ever desiring his liberty, and she giving him hopes. When the morning came, the lady left his prison by the same pass she had entered, the

secret of which yielded only to her knowledge. Christian's mind was filled with wonder at this circumstance, and his heart yearned with affection towards one (whoever she might be) that could visit him in his distress, and enter so ardently into the virtues of his cause. Above all, her face and manner were so pleasing to him, that the whole dwelt in his mind as a vision; but in the middle of his heart he nourished the hopes of escape, once more to try his fortune with the tyrant.

Now this lady who had visited him was the eldest daughter of the king, and heiress to the throne. Neither she nor Christian had ever seen each other; but being of a different nature to her father, she had long had a great affection for his nobleness and virtues, desiring nothing so much as to behold him. She was a woman of deep sensibility, sympathized with his cause of liberty, and would have espoused it, but for some lurking of natural feeling towards her father. Since Christian was fallen into this misfortune, she determined to succour him, and went into his prison for that purpose. But after she had seen him, her life, as well as his, was at stake; for she fell deeply in love with him, and saw nothing beyond this hope. When she had retired to her chamber, and was ruminating on

34 CHRISTIAN AND HIS COMPANIONS ;

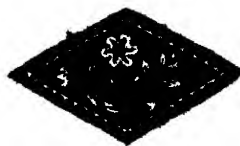
the best means to save his life, her women came running to her in great distress, crying that the king was dead. She flew to his chamber, and found him in the arms of his attendants, a hideous spectacle. Having gloried greatly at Christian's distress, he ate and drank so freely as to cause a surfeit; and being left in bed by his attendants, he had shifted his head from the pillow, so that it hung down by the bed, and so beastly insensible was he that he could not release himself. The blood flowed into his head, that his eyes were black, and starting from their sockets; his cheeks blue and puffed up; and his tongue swollen from beyond his teeth, and as black as ink. In vain they bled him, and applied baths; he was dead: like the violent beast he had lived, the victim of his own grossness. His daughter, seeing this, felt shocked, and was very miserable.

Having buried him, she bethought herself of the anxiety of Christian, and went to him, not telling him of these things. His penetrating eye soon discovered some sorrow at her heart, which he was too delicate to ask the cause of, but did all in his power to comfort her. She, feeling this, was melted to tenderness, and said, "Christian, I have an offer to make to thee. There is nothing on earth thou desirest so much

as thy liberty, and there is nothing on earth I desire so much as to be thy servant. If thou wilt take me for thy wife, thou art free; if not, thou art still free, only thou dost owe me thy love; which, if thou art long in paying, my heart will be bankrupt and broken." Here she paused anxiously. Christian replied, "Dear lady, I am neither blind, nor ungrateful; for I see thy beauty, and feel thy love and affection for me. I take thee at thy word, and will be dutiful to thy delicate affection. I ask not who thou art, for I feel full well thou art honourable." After a short time they parted affectionately, and she went sorrowfully to her council.

Three of the richest men in the king's dominions, and who were of his friendship, had conspired together to deprive the young queen of her rights, and had already taken measures for such proceedings. She, hearing of this, took a priest, and went to Christian's prison and married him. Afterwards, she told him who she was, and of the conspiracy against her crown, saying, "Thy cause is once more in thine own hands: besides, thou art to struggle for a crown, and for me, thy wife. Therefore, by the loves of those people whom thou hast so long served, I conjure thee to be vigilant." She then led him out, and with his three comrades passed

him out of the city. Having gathered arms, and secured all the money in the treasury ; she retreated, and joined her husband. The rebels, knowing their power to be great, soon came out to meet Christian ; and he, having disposed the strong posts in the hands of his three friends, joined battle with them. It was desperate and bloody ; but Christian, being able to rely upon his leaders, fought it so ably as to slaughter most of his enemies ; amongst whom were the rebel leaders. Thus he gained the reward of his merit ; the long hoped-for cause, a lovely woman, and a crown.





Z A R A,

THE RICH MAN'S DAUGHTER.

IN an ancient city of Arabia there dwelt a very rich man. He had one great failing, that of being very proud ; and to such an excess did this blind and self-perplexing fault extend, that he sacrificed every feeling to his self-devotedness and rage. Woe to the slave who spoke not on his knees, and to the embassy that shouted not his name. He was more feared than loved ; for he hated independence, but would enrich adoration, munificently. He was a widower, and had three daughters ; the eldest of whom, named Zara, was the image of her deceased mother ; the other two were reflections of their father, both in shape and nature.

This rich man's palace was ever thronged with princes, warriors, and noble strangers ; and

many had been the attempts to gain the hand of Zara, but it was handmaid to her heart. She, not having entered into the gates of pride, of pomp, and empty gorgeousness, as the rest of her family, overlooked the possessors of mines, of armies, and of kingdoms; and although she was diligent in her search, she never could find a good and sound heart amongst all this greatness; and consequently no reciprocal feelings with her own. Many noble qualities were possessed by some who sought her bed; but something was wanting that left her heart untouched. Fair time, however, was before her, for she was but just a woman; and her beauty was indeed a glowing summer that cometh after the spring.

It chanced that Zara passed a mausoleum where they were burying the dead; and as her breast was always open to powerful excitement, she delayed her suite, and went alope to the door of the sepulchre; here she sat herself on a stone, by a pillar; and sighing, she began the painful office of noticing the feelings of those who mourned. One figure, the peculiar beauty and power of which was subdued by inward sorrow to a declining tenderness, engrossed her wholly. Her interest waxed great, and her heart soft; but when his gentle hand removed

the mantle from his face to look once more upon the cold bed of death, her heart beat violently, and an enthusiasm at the noble sorrow of the countenance stifled her tears; and though the mantle again fell in a moment, enveiling the face, yet it, and the inward agony of feeling that was in the look, was stamped upon her heart for ever. Her eye followed the figure, as the procession moved to perform some other rite, and when it passed the buttress of the mausoleum, her imagination became busy with its image. She thought it to be a face familiar to her (though she had never seen it before), and that it was the same countenance she had looked for all her life, though she had never known it. She might have sat in this dream of fancy till night (for it was painfully sweet), had not the keeper of the keys aroused her. She went, looking upon her feet, with a melancholy aspect to her attendants, and the gates closed upon her. They jarred upon her soul. Then mounting her mule, she returned home, and shut herself in her chamber.

The fruit of much restlessness was to make inquiries respecting this young stranger. She learned that he was poor, but gentle; that he and his mother were the purchased slaves of her father; that his mother had died with

excessive grief, and had left him alone in such great sorrow, a pauper, and a slave.

With much smothering, Zara hid her feelings during this recital, and when it was ended her grief and tears struggled in vain with her tongue ; and she spoke, desiring her servant to carry gold to buy his freedom, and skins, and raiment ; and promised comfort, and to bid him be of good heart. For all this she was much easier ; and one week, and then another went over, but her fancy thickened with his image. His face, with that heart-breaking look, was everywhere ; her flowers were not her pride ; solitude was her only comfort, wherein she got pale ; her spirits grew aerial and refined ; and the pomp and noise of her father's palace was a grossness no longer tolerable. Another week passed ; when one morning, having had a light sleep and gentle dream, she arose, and with a soothed and quiet mind passed unattended from the garden to the road. The sun not being up, and the air of the morning cool, she strayed on (well knowing where, though she did not confess it to herself) until she reached the thatched habitation of this sad youth. When she came to think of what she was about, she trembled, but still went on. She paused at the threshold, and knocked, but no answer came. Upon looking round, she

saw him asleep beneath a tree at a well's side. At the sight of his countenance again, her heart beat violently.

He had been wandering and watching with a miserable heart through the night, with sorrow that knows no custom ; and being wearied, had cast himself down in the morning, to snatch a few moments of oblivious sleep. Zara went gently to him, and sat herself at his feet, watching his uneasy slumber. His face had recovered some colour, and his eyes were a little stained with weeping. Three hours she sat and stirred not, but gazed upon his face. At length he awoke ; and having assured himself that it was no dream, his sorrow gave way to courtesy, his courtesy to tenderness, and tenderness increased to love and affection. The lady well believed all he said ; not only because she was willing, but moreover, her life existed only in such a speech ; so she cast off her purple and gold, put on a dress of skins, and walked with him ; and married him that day.

When the morning came, no whit repenting of her great change, she sent one to her father, telling who she had married, and saying, " I love the choice that my heart has made, better than gold, or price, or kingdoms, or renown ; and am content with the little honour that is in

the virtue of my act. But as I know you, my father, and my sisters, affect the honour that is in the world's eye, I must leave your house; which I am willing to do, though I shall not love you the less. It was in my power to have taken money and jewels, and to have enriched myself as a princess; this I have not done, as I wot well all these were the price of my obedience. As, however, I have wedded myself to nakedness, your anger will demand that which the fulness of your defeated hope bestowed; being therefore without money, it is my request that you will enrich me with a little gold, so that I, and my dear lord, may not starve at this present."

As the messenger reported this, the rich man trembled, and was dumb with rage, and suddenly he smote him so hard that it nearly killed him; and he went raving about mad, vowing that he would have their blood. He shut himself up in his chamber, to think on what orders he should give to lay hands upon their lives; but when his rage abated, some touch of tenderness came unconfessedly to his breast. He walked out, called upon his daughters, his friends, and all his relatives; summoned his vassals, gathered them in the great hall, and told them all the sorrow of his proud heart;

saying, "Put ye on your gay attire, and take with you the cymbal, and the pipe, and the dulcimer, and make music; and proceed ye with songs and rejoicing by the highway, until you shall come to this woman's house; take ye also, my daughters, in your hands, a young camel, a map, a bag of pebbles, and four dried skins; and say ye to her, without pity, ridiculing her estate, 'Thy father sends the portion thou deservest, and fitting thy most honourable marriage. For thy five hundred camels, take thou this one; for thy lands, thy woods, and springs on this tracked earth, take thou this map; these pebbles be thy jewels and thy gold; and these hard skins be all the tender raiment for thy cherished limbs.' Then leave her to the shafts of the world." And they all went as they were bid.

When Zara heard the sound of her father's music, and saw the banners and the array that approached, she said to her husband, "Be of good cheer and grieve not; for you see that my father's heart is turned gentle, and that thou hast not plucked me from such high fortune (which has given thee so much pain)." The numbers came to her, and the music ceased. And when they had said with scorn all they had desired, she turned not pale, but looking in her husband's face she kissed him before them all.

Then she took the skins, the pebbles, and the map, and put them upon the camel; and turning to the multitude smiled sweetly, and said, "Tell my father that I am content." So she bowed, and put her arm upon her husband's neck, and leading the camel by a string, she turned her back to them, and journeyed towards the desert. And the multitude returned shouting.

Here the virtuous were content and happy; and the proud heart plagued to the amount of its folly: but "Heaven, that hath the hearts of princes in its own hand," worketh after its own way.

These two built them a house, and the continual content and cheerfulness of Zara at length shamed away the melancholy that existed in the fine feeling of her husband; he knowing that for him she had become an outcast, and that he was a beggar without any worldly comforts. The remainder of the money, that Zara in her charity had sent to her husband, was now their daily life and anchor; it was soon gone, and they be-thought themselves how they might live. Zara said, "Heaven did not put it into the head of my dear father to bestow on me the camel to no use; howbeit I love the animal with almost a holy love, not only that it fondles me and is so

gentle to kneel when I shall mount it, but that it is allied to the best remembrance of my home; why should we not turn this gift to our use? Hew thyself a bow and arrows, and a spear; hunt thou the beasts for their skins; and with the feathers of birds, by the rareness of the art taught me in my infancy, I will weave mats and fans of devices above all common powers. We will from time to time load our camel with the labour of our hands, and take our tent to a far market, and thus live to love and bless one another." Her husband was astonished, but comforted, and did as she had said; and her singing and her converse made the way short and the labour sweet.

Thus led they for some months an enviable life; but one morning, when two months longer would have made her a mother, a fever seized her; at night she grew dumb, and on the morrow died. Her husband fell into an oblivion of despair, and was as a single weed in the garden of paradise, misery's heir. On the third day he buried her with his own hands. When the sharpness of his agony was somewhat past, he loved to linger about her favourite haunts, and bestowed all tenderness on the camel she had so dearly loved; and this patient creature, missing the gentle hand that had fostered it daily,

shewed a dumb sorrow by a thousand signs, that found a way to his breaking heart.

His way of life became wild, he loathed all intercourse as intrusive ; and finding that he must follow the same means as hitherto to live, he loaded his camel, and went his way to the market. Each step that he took, reminded him of his happy estate, the last time he had travelled that way ; he thought of the many things that his dear wife had said in the places they had passed, of the songs she had sung, and the tears rolled from his eyes by night and by day ; yet these musings were comfortable to him. He sold the skins, and returned, full of the soothing thoughts of the past, and agonizing certainty of the present reality.

Not having eaten or drunk that day, he stopped his camel ; and looking for the skins containing the water (which he had filled as usual from the great spring), found that they had come unloosed and were gone. Parched with thirst, and thinking that he had dropped them many miles off, he knew not what to do ; but sighing at such mean persecutions of fate, he mounted his camel and retraced his way, but they were nowhere to be found. As a whole skin of water would not have been enough to have carried him back to the spring, he be-

thought him that his time was come, and that heaven would at length release him. So he unloaded his camel, that it might go whither it would, and cast himself on the sand.

The night came on, and was very dark ; his bowels grew fevered, and raged with heat, and he passed the night in horrible torture. When the morning was come, his eyes were starting forth ; and he was bent double with pain : his tongue was parched, and clave to the roof of his mouth, and was dry and pursed like a fig. He saw the camel lying beside him, and be-thought him of the way among the Arabs, who when they are in danger for want of water, slay these beasts, and open the pouch that is in the chest, which nature has provided for them to store their drink for many days. When he arose to do the same, he thought upon the service that this gentle creature had done him, and of the love his dear wife bore to it ; and notwithstanding his physical agony, the tenderness of his mind was above the act, and he could not do it. He again threw himself down, and soon died.

The camel staid by him three days ; but when the water was gone, and the pain of thirst came on, he made madly for the desert to find some spring, but as there was none there he must have perished.



FRIENDSHIP.



HERE lived in England two friends. They were both of them in their freshest youth ; but unprovoked and irremediable sorrow fixed upon the heart of one ; and he, being of a most tender and susceptible nature, it soon brought him from the robustness of youth to sickness and imbecility. It became necessary that he should go into Italy for the restoration of his health, and he went to the pleasant Florence. The cause of his sorrow still continuing, like a jagged iron in his heart, it rusted and corroded, and he soon died a martyr to it.

His friend ever after became more silent and melancholy ; and though his love for him was great before they went from England, yet having felt his gentle dependence upon him in his illness and his dying days, it became greater after his death ; for he felt that he never could do

any thing for him again, and that^{*} all was at an end. He bethought him of a speech his friend had made just before his breath quitted him, but which then had passed unheeded; it was "Would, Fred., I had died in England; I love my country, and to have been buried there I should have died content." And instantly he determined to fulfil his desire; he made a religion of the thought, and set about it with all his zeal.

From his constant attendance on his friend, all his money was gone; he knew no soul in Florence, and without a heavy sum he could not accomplish his intent. Now there was a rich man there, who was reported by the people of Florence to be charitable, and to distribute his wealth with a liberal hand; the youth went to him without hesitation, and told him of his intention, requesting the loan of some money. This rich man, however, was ostentatious, and not charitable; and, having no feeling for him, dismissed him, ridiculing his folly, and saying, "That his friend, being now dead, could have no desire; that he would assist the needy, but would not waste his coin upon the idle whims of any person; that as this was the last bed his friend would want, and must be under the surface of the earth, it mattered not where." This

he well knew; but the words of his friend were graven on his heart. So he went into that part of the city, where the rich men resorted, and looking into their faces, chose four, whose countenances best pleased him, and spoke to them as follows. "I guess all of you have got wives, children, or parents, or some comfortable bosoms in this world, where your affections are fixed; it is to the heart, the temple where that affection is shrined, that I now make my appeal. If they were to make a dying request to you, would you not fulfil it?" They looked on one another strangely, and answered, "Yes." He resumed: "I came to Italy, to your Florence here, with a sick friend, the friend of my bosom; he is dead, and gone to oblivion: but as he was humane, kind, and virtuous, his memory lives in my heart, and is freshened with my tears." Here he wept bitterly, and was so full of noble sorrow, that one of the strangers, forgetting his mean apparel, and the strangeness of the thing, feelingly took his hands in his and comforted him; he then went on and explained all to them, saying, "That though his poor friend had not desired him to do this thing, yet as it was the last he could ever do, he had a great hope that it would be fulfilled; though he scarcely saw by what means, unless they would advance

him money enough to effect it ; as he knew no person, and had no security to offer but his own honour." They were so sensibly touched with his greatness of soul, that one of them took him to his house, clothed him in new apparel, gave him the money, and, embracing him, sent him away joyful.

Early in the morning he walked out of the city, and gathered the most beautiful flowers then in season, with herbs of the strongest fragrance ; and causing his friend to be put into a case of lead, he covered him with them. He watched all day by his side, and in the evening, when the ship was ready, kissed his lips, and he was enclosed from his sight for ever. At night he went aboard with a bursting heart.

When he reached England, he gathered their mutual friends, and caused him to be buried under a yew tree in the churchyard of the village where he was born. After resting some days, he returned to Florence, and laboured with his hands till the debt was paid.



CLAUDIUS AND GERTRUDE ;

OR, LOVE AND DELICACY.

FORMERLY, in Denmark, 'dwelt a lady of a most noble family, both young in years and of the rarest beauty ; but above all this she had a great heart, and was as noble in mind as in birth.

While she was at the court of Britain (where she had spent some seasons with others, ladies and Danish gentlemen, after the ratifying a friendly peace between the two kingdoms) she was wooed by many a knightly tongue ; and many gallant and high-born youths contended for her favour and regard. Heaven, however, put it into her power to judge of the strength of their affections.

Being out on a party of hawking with the king, her horse threw her, and so severely in-

jured her knee that she became a cripple. When they who had so anxiously inquired after her health during her illness, and had proffered so much formerly, heard this, they slackened their attentions, by degrees became cold and negligent, and when she appeared abroad again, were reserved and polite; full of pity, but out of love. Though the misfortune gave a melancholy turn to her mind, yet she felt not the coldness of any of these people (whom she never could have loved), and passed them over in silence, glad to be released from their besieging importunities. Knowing that heaven doeth as it will, she made herself easy in mind; more especially as she found the affections of those friends who really loved her, grew more delicate and tender; and that she had only lost some of the empty vanity of the world.

Soon after this, the Danes returned to their country, carrying with them some of the English nobility, to whose honour all Denmark assembled. The king ordered them to be entertained with banquets, tournaments, and revels, according to the custom of that time. And now it was that this fair lady felt the sadness of her affliction.

A noble youth, called Claudius, cousin to the prince of Denmark, returned at the same time

from a visit of some years at the court of Poland. He was a most gallant youth, with a figure like Mars, and a leader in all warlike exercises ; so that the lists were ordered for three days, in honour of his return. When they were pitched, the king and the court assembled, and the trumpets sounded to the charge.

Few persons knew the armour of Claudius, which was of massy silver scales ; his beaver was up, and just as he was fixing his lance, his eyes fell upon the face of this beautiful woman. His admiration was as sudden as severe ; and he became entranced, so that his heart beat violently. The knight who was opposed to him rode directly at him, and nearly unhorsed him before he was aroused ; but returning to the charge, at a moment when he could have done any thing, he brought his opponent to the ground with the fury of his zeal.

Whatever his love of chivalry might be, he felt little inclined to pursue it at this time ; so that he rode often past this lady, without singling out any of the champions. By his frequent passing, she observed him, and thought him the most gallant figure there, but no more.

As soon as the jousts were done, he gave his helmet to his page ; and having gathered his luxuriant hair back upon his shoulders, seated

himself at the banquet, opposite this lady, but to feast only at the beauty of her countenance. When Gertrude turned round, and saw him patiently gazing upon her face, she thought he was an angel. Farewell to all contentment ! She became the slave of love. Forgetting, at that moment, her misfortune, her eyes fed at his, in a dream of luxury ; though short, yet heavenly sweet. Soon, however, the remembrance of her former lovers, and of her affliction, came over her, and she looked in his face so mournfully that it chilled him, and he grew sick at heart. She wore, for that time, such a settled sorrow in her face, that his cheek got pale, and he could not look at her surcharged eyes ; he dared not speak, for he feared to hear that she was married, or bound by some tie that severed them for ever. He quitted the board early ; and as he went, with a slow and lingering step, he fixed his eyes upon her face. Gertrude looked after him, feeling that with him went her hope, and at her shoulder stood despair. When she had gazed a little while upon his seat, she went home ; and, having shut herself up, she finished the night in weeping bitterly. She felt she loved him, and he felt that he loved her.

When the next day was come, Gertrude reasoned with herself, whether it was just to nourish

a passion in Claudius which could not be fully answered. Her delicacy was pained in this discussion; but she determined to stay away for that day, whatever heart-ache it might cause her, as she plainly saw that he loved her, and that to encourage it would be only to give him more pain; and all day she wept and mourned over the hardness of her fate, as patient as a sacrifice.

The trumpets sounded; and when Claudius rode into the lists, and saw the seat unoccupied, and that the lady was absent, he was beset by a thousand agonizing conjectures; but still something so fatal seemed hid in her mournful look, that he dared not ask any about her. Finding the gates were shut, and that no more could enter the palace that day, he grew mad with passion at this persecution of Fate, and, fixing his arms in wrath, he made such savage havoc amongst the knights, that they dreaded his approach, and feared to tilt with him. After this, he quitted the lists suddenly.

Gertrude, wearied with the day's sorrow, slept that night well, and her spirits were refreshed; but more by her dream than any other thing, for it was full of promise and hope. At what will not the wretched grasp! Soon she heard of Claudius's fame, of his passiveness, his furious

victory, and retire; and well her heart could interpret the cause. So fond was she in her affection, that angels could not have persuaded her to stay from the court that day. She put on her most plain attire and went. When Claudius rode in, gallant in hope, and saw his lady there, he shouted; and holding despair at bay (seeing nothing but her beauty), couched his lance, and bore down all before him. So great was his prowess that the king bade him come to him. He knelt before him; and, in the face of all present, the king took an armlet from the queen's arm, and braced it over his mail upon his wrist, and made him her champion.

He again took his seat opposite Gertrude, and besought at her eyes that he might be encouraged to speak, and so advance upon his desire; but she was more sorrowful than ever, and her countenance was so sad and mournful that it defied hope. He dreaded to speak to her, feeling his tongue to be wordless; and, fearing to ask his despair, he gazed alternately at her and the ground, in silent sorrow. She, seeing him thus pale and affected, fell into an agony; and while she railed inwardly at her own cruelty, the tears followed one another unnoticed to her breast; but he saw them, and determined to do something. He again tried

to speak of comfort, but he could not utter a word ; so, with a trembling hand, he unloosed the bracelet the king had given him, and laid before her. She took up the token, kissed it, and put it to her heart ; and, having let fall a tear upon it, shook her head mournfully, and put it from whence she had taken it ; beckoning the page to come and return it to the knight. He was so overcome with her sorrow, that his eyes grew moist, and he left the hall. As soon as he was gone, again she looked upon his empty seat, and went weeping to her room.

When Claudius had thought upon this, he saw that the lady was in love with him ; and, whatever mystery this might be, he was determined to face and conquer it, or suffer in the attempt ; for without her he could not live. So he returned presently to the hall, determined to speak to her, but found her gone. He went to the keeper of the gate, and asked if the lady who had just gone was married ? The man replied, "No ;" at which the heart of Claudius expanded with joy ; and he inquired further of her estate and her name. The man answered, "I suppose you mean the lady Gertrude, who went into England, and has just returned, afflicted with lameness." Claudius shifted, as if he had been hit a blow : he saw, at once, the

hitherto inexplicable cause of her silence and sorrow, and retired perplexed and full of pain.

Notwithstanding his great love for her, so repugnant was his feeling to her misfortune that he could not master it. He went up and down distracted; flying from the noise of the city to the quiet of the forest, and from the quiet of the forest back to the city.

Gertrude went home and fell sick. Knowing that Claudius must have inquired for her and found the truth, and guessing his feelings by his absence, she besought Heaven to die. On the seventh day, when excessive grief had worn her heart and spirits nearly to breaking, and the leeches had reported that her dissolution was at hand, she desired one to copy from her words as follows:—

“MY DEAR CLAUDIUS;

“Though I could not live for you, I can die for you. I thank Heaven that the tongues about me utter my knell: I am descending into the pit. I must first beg pardon for the pain that I have caused you, though it no longer exists, as is manifest by your indifference; yet, as I die your loyal servant, sprinkle a few flowers on my grave, in remembrance.

“GERTRUDE.”

When Claudius read this, he smote his brow for a fool. All his love returned as new as fire; and, when he thought upon her great delicacy through this affair, he wondered, and was ashamed. He took horse, and flew to her house; but they denied him entrance, saying their lady was dying: but, by threats and protestations, he gained the lady's chamber. Her beauty was greater than ever, though fading; it touched the heart. On seeing him, the same melancholy look returned, that had so pained him before; but, recovering herself, she, with a low, yet cheerful voice, thanked him, as one who had long known him, and put forth her hand kindly and familiarly. He, seeing death in her countenance, fell upon his knees, and hiding his face in her pillow, wept bitterly: and when he looked upon her, she was also weeping. He told her of his want of feeling, and of his penitence for his neglect; kissed her, and said he hoped she would recover and marry him. This unexpected declaration so acted upon her feelings that it caused her to faint. He raised her head, and laid it on his bosom; and presently reviving, she said, "As love for you has made me thus suddenly weak, and miserable, and dying, I do think, by the new life and joy I feel within me, that to be thy wife would re-

cover me. But can you love me with my failing and misfortune of lameness? Restore not animation, to make us both miserable." He answered, eagerly, "Yes, yes!" and kissed her. "Then," said she, "rejoice; for, if you could love me under my misfortune, how will you love me out of it? I am no longer lame; my severe illness has relaxed the contracted sinews, and I am as whole as when a child!" Shame was in his face; but she kissed it into joy, and they parted.

She soon recovered, and they were married; and Gertrude at length received the reward of her great delicacy of mind.





PHILIPPO AND BRUNO;

OR, GENIUS AND COMMON SENSE.



HERE lived in Naples a man of mean fortune, who had two sons, both remarkable for their prominence of character, considering the manner after which they had been brought up. Being a bustling man, of low trade, he felt (as most such people do, from the necessity of custom) more for their worldly interests, and respectable doing in life, than for their state of mind, and natural dispositions.

Philippo, the eldest, was placed to the business of a clothier; but, as the common saying went, he did not take to it. Indeed, the general opinion of him was, that he was of a confirmed idle disposition, of deep passions, though behaving in every respect well, never giving offence to any one, except in his inattention to business.

He therefore came back to his father's house, profitless and useless, but not worthless ; for there was something in his disposition that would not suffer him to be ashamed of his conduct. When he was spoken to seriously on the matter, he answered, that all men could not endure to rise in the morning at daylight, and do nothing till set of sun but examine the woof of broad cloth, try the dye of it, and measure it by yards into parcels (and he stipped his muscular arm in proof of it) ; and said, that that, and killing all the moths to be found in his master's shop, was all he had done for two lingering years. Though all rated or laughed at him, he still persisted in it.

It happened soon after, that the king of Naples intended to be crown'd ; and having but few jewels in his treasury, he manned two vessels ; sending one to traffic with the Moors, and another to Araby, for valuables of the greatest rarity. It happened that both vessels returned, and met at a certain point within sight of Naples ; but a storm, in all the turbulence of wrath, broke over them, so that they went to the bottom suddenly, being grappled together. The king, vexed at the matter, and feeling the loss of so much money from his treasury, offered an immense reward to any one who would con-

trive some means by which to raise the treasure, so that it might be restored. But in those days, this was a matter of fiction, and considered to be so unaccountable an undertaking, that all, thinking it not to be practicable without the aid of magic, declined it.

Now Philippo had just been reproved by his friends, and called an idle fellow, as well as unfeeling, for still wasting, by his daily hunger, the slender means of his old father ; and, with a heart bitter against fate and man, and full of pain, he heard of this reward. He went into the slip of garden at the back of the house, and thought deeply of the matter ; and sent at once to the king, saying he would undertake it, and be ready in seven days to try the effects of his invention. He fagged night and day at it, and was prepared at the time. But his friends laughed at him, and counselled him, part out of envy, lest he even might succeed ; some out of meanness, that a youth of his estate should attempt strong matters, out of his sphere ; and many, from a secret vanity and petty love of power, at being able to bestow their self-soothing advice upon one already out of favour with every body ; and with the irritable desire of making him discontented with himself (like true worldly friends). And all because they forgot

that few things are impossible with man, and nothing with God ; and because they could not bear that any one (much less one despised) should accomplish what they had not the courage even to attempt. But he was not meant for a clothier, and could not repent and turn back.

Coming to the trial, he behaved himself with great courage and perseverance, and succeeded to a certain, but very limited degree ; so that it was indeed (as expected) a decided failure. The king, being deeply interested in it, attended ; and, like most great (that is, rich and powerful) but inconsiderate men, from habits of commanding and being obeyed, had soothed himself into certain hopes of success, which, when they were blighted, turned all to the fury of disappointment. Calling Philipppo before him, he reproved him for the great loss he had put him to, and charged him with ignorance and folly. But Philipppo, whose sagacity and vigilance were roused, and who for the first time was in earnest, saw plainly, that the king was enraged only at not having got back his valuables, and secretly in his heart no way abused him.

Knowing the worth of the ships sunk to be uppermost, and a great matter in the king's

mind, he talked coolly with him ; telling him he had observed what part of the works had failed, in the great practice and trial of the Whole, which he never could do in his small chamber ; and that, if the king would advance him more money to defray the expenses, he would again undertake it, and try, with his improved knowledge, to do it with more success. After more words, and some hesitation, the king consented to it. Philippo, not at all faint-hearted, but inveterately determined on gaining his purpose, began with renewed courage (notwithstanding the sneers and scoffings of those about him) to labour in his design, and when the time came, he again tried it ; and, though with more success, yet with certain failure ; so that the king grew disgusted, and was crowned in such common dresses as could be got for him.

Philippo's father, seeing him ridiculed for his folly, and laughed at by all, joined, (like a man of business) in the cry, and drove him from his house to try his fortune, and live (like the birds of heaven) as he could. But he, deaf to their folly, and dumb to their malice, was above them ; having such deep grief of mind at his failure, that he thought not of them, and went beating his head, and cursing himself for a beast, at the smallness of his wit.

Being reduced to beggary, having no shoes to his feet, and in ragged apparel, he sat himself by the road side, and began to think, the king's passion being subsided, how much of his desire to re-possess the treasure still remained. Seeing his deplorable condition, he said to himself, "I have thought of nothing but doing this thing ever since. Albeit I am almost out of hope, yet am I in so low a state that I can lose nothing. I will go to the king once more, and will endeavour to awaken his sympathy for what has befallen me, in being driven from my father's roof; and also revive the great hopes (in naming which I will use my tongue eloquently) that may still attend this one attempt." When he came to the king, he pitied him not, and listened to his hopes as we do to the memory of one who is dead, and forbade him his presence. But Philipppo, lingering at the gate till some hours after, when the king came out, dropped upon his knee, and said, "If I do not succeed, banish me forth of Naples. But, I pray thee, let me once more try my hitherto evil fortune." The king, from his earnestness and great desire, was once more deluded into the hope of success; ordered the money to be given him, and that he should try again. But out, alas! he failed again: and yet so reasonable

and mature had his plan become, that he was within a little space of success. Now the king, cursing his own folly, banished him for nine years ; and Philippo was laughed at by all who knew him.

He left Naples with a heavy heart, and went into Florence ; where (not being able to go to any business, despising it, and being of a robust make) he laboured in gardens and vineyards, and worked in the harvest ; but evermore having in sight the point where the ships had sunk, and his great design.

When five years were expired, war was raging furiously at Naples, and the king and country were in imminent danger ; the king having only a handful of troops at command, and no money to fee others to assist him. Philippo, full of his ancient courage and fortitude, buckled on a belt and thereto a sword, and covering himself with a pilgrim's habit, went, through many dangers, to Naples ; and going to the king's tent, he reported himself as one who could assist him in his exigencies. Being admitted, and alone with the king, he disclosed himself and his purpose ; saying, " My life is forfeit ; if you please, destroy me. But I pray you have faith in me only this once." And, after some talk, the king said to him, " I am full of wonder at thy great determi-

nation; it should seem nothing can alter thy purpose: but I have been thrice duped by thee, and I must be wary. I now offer thee thy liberty if thou wilt go; if not, I will spare thee money to try once more; but as it is as precious to me at this time as drops of blood, so shall thy blood answer the loss of it. If thou succeedest, thou shalt have thrice the reward offered to thee hitherto, considering the greatness of my need; if not, thy head shall be struck off with an axe. Decide therefore on thy fate." Philippo accepted the king's offer, went immediately, and drew up the treasure, and secured all; so that the king gathered an army thereby, and fought a great battle, and drove off the enemy. Then he called Philippo to him, paying him the great reward without grudging, and put him in trust.

Philippo went to his father, embraced him, and made him the steward of his fortunes; and gave a feast and gifts to those who had called themselves his friends, saying to them, "Let old matters be forgotten, and let us become better known to each other in future." So that they were covered with shame.

Thus we see that the world may be wrong in its judgment: that drapers and clothiers are not the greatest men: and that a resolved soul

is the tough cable to anchor us through life with some safety ; or to teach us to bear defeat with power ; and is one of the next things under fate.

Now the brother, who was called Bruno, from the difference of his nature, had treated the idleness of Philippo with contempt ; and was always the first to level little unpleasant truisms at him, to endeavour to arouse him to a sense of his worldly perdition. Bruno was stationed in the house of a merchant, as a poor assistant at the books ; but, making business his god, he was always at hand, being present from light till dark, and labouring with devotion at all times. From this he became useful ; and those above him, feeling they could repose all trust in him, neglected many things for their pleasures that they otherwise would not have done ; so that from being useful he became invaluable, and of course rose according to his importance. Having been in the concern a short time, both the other parties died, and left him master of a most wealthy business, of which he made the most ; taking no one in to relieve him, but working in the same way as when he had come to it the first day. He thought not of his banished brother, nor cared for him ; advancing such only as were the most industrious in his affairs.

Surely there is no heart so hard, so unfor-
giving towards impassioned minds, or even
unsuccessful genius itself, as that of a man who
sinks his feelings in his trade, and sees not be-
yond the petty sphere of his wary, bustling,
worldly interests; nor are there any, that genius
and liberality would feel more pain at being
relieved by, than such characters.

Bruno, however, held the stakes of fortune
but a short time: his success was of him, and
not in him: it rested too much upon the
chances of outward circumstance to challenge
implicit faith: it was not the breed of his own
brain - his brother's was. When the war began,
he lost an argosy. His factors failed him
abroad, and trade was at an end at home: the
ladder was shaken, and he came down, rolling
at his brother's foot.

Philippo, after his success, took him out of
prison, fed, and clothed him, gave him money,
got him into the king's household, and did all
that a brother should do.





EDMUND AND EDWARD;

OR, THE TWO FRIENDS.

TWO Englishmen, named Edmund and Edward, were friends; that is, in the full sense of the word, for this tale will show wherein friendship consists; its disinterestedness, its total unselfish and honourable love of another's happiness.

These two were left, at the age of eighteen, orphans, Edmund had a small fortune, but Edward none. This mattered not much, for what belonged to one was equally the other's, and the demon money was (as their pleasures) a mutual benefit, divided equally between them.

It happened that Edmund fell in love with a young lady, whom he had casually met; but he had lost all traces of her, and never could hear of her afterwards. Edward, seeing his melancholy, did all he could to engage his mind; and,

having learnt a description of the lady, went about the town and country searching for her. This, however, ended fruitlessly, and he was about to return to his old methods of consolation with his friend; when in one of his searches he became himself a slave to the mad passion. But the goodness of his heart was placed in an unkindly ground; his love was a barren love, for the woman was a harlot; a notorious, abandoned, and beautiful harlot. For a long time he steeled his bosom against the fatality attending on an affection for such a woman; and smote his forehead, calling himself fool and beast. Soon, however, this gave way to the most fervent and overwhelming love for her; he only saw what she might be, feeling cruelly what she really was.

This woman moved among a circle of lords, and none could whisper in her ear whose words were not golden ones; therefore Edward, to be by her side, was obliged to draw largely upon his friend. Nor, indeed, did this go far with him in the riotous way in which he lived; nor furnish many opportunities by which to see this woman.

Deep thinking made him lose his colour and health; and one day when he returned, he was so abject and full of despair, that Edmund

feared for him, and could hold his peace no longer ; so, taking him by the hand, he pressed it fervently, and said "Edward, I have had a silent tongue, though an aching heart, for a long time. What is it troubles you ? If it be a secret, too gigantic for my hearing (as I should gather from your long silence), I prythee do not unburthen yourself to me. Nay, look not so mournful—I only mean that I would rather not know this delicate matter ; but as almost all evils have a remedy, tell me only how I can assist you, for if any one can, I can do it. But I cannot any longer bear to see you thus ill and despairing, without speaking." Edward was touched to the heart, and fell on his neck in tears, saying to him, "Canst thou bid a dead rose to live ?" Edmund answered, "Your question is idle." Edward replied, "Then can you not help me." And rising frantic from his seat, he said, "I am glad of it ; I am a beast, and deserve no help. I must sow my seed upon a rock, and then must starve, and my dear friends must grieve. What swallow loveth the consuming kite ? What merchant sporteth in amongst the rocks ? Who is proud of scorned things ? Who opes his heart to scatter'd poison ? I, only I, the simple, single fool. Eyes, I will tear ye out, ye damned slaves, that first

did show her beauty to my heart, betraying so your mystery." And Edmund said, "Edward, are you in love?" He answered, as scorning fate, "O! aye." Edmund said, "I am glad of it." And he answered, "You will hate me soon: the woman that I love is a harlot, a common strumpet, a helpster, as the wind to the catching sail. Yet scorn me not, 'tis such a wreck! as beautiful as Eden's garden after it was damned, where fragments that the heavenly eye had fancied lay in chaotic heaps; bright grandeur disarrayed. Oh! do not scorn me, one of us is true; for I would bear greatly, were it misery here, such as men howl at, were it fear hereafter, with but a little hope in it, I would take it. Aye, any thing to make her once again a maid." Edmund, pressing his heart, said, "I am sorry for you." And he answered enthusiastically, "Sorry, for what? I am proud, man; I know of great things for this bad world to own. Last night—thou knowest how awful night and silence are to the guilty—well, in the dead and middle of the night I woke her, and in laughter (wherein there was some heart-ache, for I, poor fool, lay thinking all the night) talked to her of her state of life: bade her look round and see the shallow depth she hardly swam in: shewed that her flatterers

coveted but loved her not, and fancied her sarsnet equal, loving her even to the extent of her train and ruffles: talked of old age, of death, of Heaven, of God: whereat she trembled, and cried out for mercy; shed tears upon my neck; begged me to help her; noted the secret silence of the night, and her mind stirred with agony. She slept no more that night: in the morn she arose with unpursed lips."

"Well, well, how did this work?"

"Now you have struck me here on the breast. Will you believe it? In the unscreening daylight, five heartless lords, forsooth, in silken suits, 'did ravel all this matter out,' by playing with her fan, and making bad comparisons."

"And do you love her still?"

"Oh! Edmund! Each day we walk some paces towards our grave: between this step and the last nothing can do me good but only she. Do I love her? Thou hast never seen her lip, her hand, her eye; nor known of her good soul so turned to bad; for if you had you would let me take thy cloth to wipe away these tears."

Edmund did all in his power to comfort him, seeing the nobleness of his unfortunate passion, and that he was not allied to her dishonour; sent privily for money, and laid it in his chamber, and helped him to this woman's company, as

much as he was able; trusting that Heaven would by some means help his dear friend. He retired to the country to decrease his expense, and lived upon little. But the exorbitant demands of his thoughtless friend, in two years not only reduced his fortune, but beggared him. When Edmund found this, he grieved deeply that he could no longer supply him; and was pained to know how best to tell it to him, knowing that the truth, if told, would make him most miserable. So he disguised it; and sent to him, saying that he could only supply him with a little, as he had honourable demands upon him, for a large debt contracted by his late father, which could not be paid for some time.

Having done this, he set diligently about working for a livelihood for himself, and a supply for his friend; and being a man of some genius, he undertook the defence of certain public matters for the people; and by this means obtained a comfortable income. His fortune, however, turned (and that for the better) most suddenly and unexpectedly; and as a reward for his great patience and gentleness, he at last succeeded in gaining all that his heart most ardently desired.

One evening, after having made a most suc-

cessful defence to some important opposition, he was surprised by the following note.

“EDMUND, OR, DEAR EDMUND ;

“I am as bold as willing to address you by this title, knowing your gentle disposition. More so, as it will clear away at once all formal weeds from the flowery way to my heart ; and also, that should I not prove so dear to you (which I think fate cannot prevent), yet will you ever be dear to me.

“To be brief, then. I met last night at a mask, your friend Edward, who was ranging about in a loose domino, in some hot pursuit. I knew him immediately, though I had only seen him once—But oh ! that once never will be forgotten. I joined him, and inquiring, full of hope and fear, about you, learnt (O bliss !) your kindness, and your love for me ; that we had both done nothing but hunt for each other since that first short gaze, and but for this trifling accident never might have met.—On such a hair does mortal happiness depend.—But having found you, I will now make prize of your heart.

“If you will marry me, I am your wife ; and my fortune is yours at once, Come thou and claim me ; and that suddenly, as there are

friends and relations who would sell me to a golden calf.

“Yours for ever,

“EMMA.”

He departed immediately, claimed the lady ; married her, and brought her to his house. Thus did his own generosity reward him ; for, but for his delicacy to his friend, he had been ruined, and neither might have seen this lady again.

Edmund, however, did not immediately give up his public employment, but carried it on like a patriot ; till it ended in covering him with honour, and hearty thanks. For his poor friend he knew nothing could be done but supplying him with money : he hoped, however, that so good a heart and such great faith would not be thrown away. He also had seen this woman, who was one of those, who, with virtue, would have been most virtuous and admired by all. Humanity would have dropped a tear, seeing such noble beauty run to waste.

Edward still followed the bent of his affections, and waited upon his fate most patiently ; choosing such times as he could find his lady alone, and in a tranquil state of mind, and drawing her over hills and vales, would talk

with her of this world and the next; ever softening her mind by gentle degrees, till she was fit to receive the truth, and he could speak out. His tone had become patriarchal; his countenance kind, intensely sweet, but sorrowful; his step slow, and his action decisive. In the great face of nature, he often made her shift her guilty eyes at what her ears received: under the heavens, walking on the earth, she was disarmed of vanity; fear, sorrow, and tears, became habitual. But above all, love for the object, on whom she felt a kind of hope she might rely for future forgiveness; and as he was her lover only, and not her paramour, there was an awful distance between them, that worked in her a strange respect for him.

Edward began to see a change in her conduct; such as great esteem suddenly shown, and curbed impatience when he told blunt and unpleasant truths; and above all, in silent moments, tears, sharp and agonizing tears, unprovoked, flowing from the rifts of a broken heart. So he laboured with secret prayer, and with watching, and every patient endeavour in his virtuous work.

Now it happened about this time, that this woman's mother died, who had been much respected, virtuous, and good. Edward would

not let her know it: intending to work upon her by the event; and having spoken to her a long time, and subdued her great spirits, he said gravely to her, "Madam, your mother is dead." And she snatched as it were for breath, as if he had struck her, and falling heavily on his shoulder, wept as though her heart would break. Presently she got up, and wiped her eyes, and said cheerfully, "It is past." And he said, "What?" She replied, "Oh! Edward, what it is for a sinner to become as a little child! I feel all here about my heart, as if a girdle, that would have burst me, were suddenly broken. God! I hope thou wilt forgive me." Edmund said, "Beware, beware, that fiery tongue of thine may find thunder in heaven, for its false invocations. Play not with salvation." She replied, "Rob not thyself of thy reward; believe it not, but thou hast saved my soul."

Then leaving him, she attired herself in black, and putting on a veil of crape, came to him, and said, "Come." He asked her, "Where?" She answered, "Where should a daughter go, that hath a mother dead, but to her bed; and follow her with slow and pained feet to the dark grave? Believe me not; think not you have saved me, but come." She smiled

sweetly upon him, and then, looking sorrowful, went out with him, weeping all the way. And Edward's heart began to swell from that hour.

When she came to her mother's corpse she acted nothing ; her misery was sharp, and when she thought upon the pain she had caused her mother, her despair was complete, and she sat as one mad.

When they had returned from burying her mother, she threw herself upon her knees before Edward, and looking on him said, "Heaven, sir, will return the good you have done me, so be that struck out of our account. Heaven and your own heart will understand between you. I am an excluded third. Believe me, sir, I now love you as greatly as you have loved me ; be my loss my punishment. I do not ask you to be my fellow any longer ; knowing that my foulness must have long made you pity, but not love me, and that you have laboured thus far, only to save my soul. You have done it, if Heaven will. I now ask you, as I am a poor abandoned outcast, to put me in some way to live honestly, that I rust not with idleness, nor perish for want ; and to see me sometimes."

But Edward knew that his hope had long swam with a false bottom ; and being determined on proving her, said, "Madam, we that

are fledged know what checks the cunning hawk can make. You, though as common as dirt, once despised me. I have laboured thus far, only to strike your heart against your rocky ribs, and so bruise it ; I have done so, and glory in it. I now look upon thee as mine enemy, who has fallen from the battlement of his strength ; and cursing him, leave him to die " And he went out smiling, with affected malice She followed him with her eye as far as she could see, and then, listening to his last footfall, gathered her hair, and holding her forehead, turned to the right and to the left ; and looking mournfully round, burst into fresh tears, as a child who hath lost its way.

Now the evening was advanced, so walking a few paces in the field where she was, she threw herself on some half-made hay, and slept soundly till the morning. Then rising refreshed, and going into the town, she sold all the jewels she had about her, and took up her abode with a respectable family ; who, being humane people, got her employment ; and so she lived.

Edward, who had watched over her all this time, still jealous of his conquest, and tempting his fate, took care, that two noblemen, her former favourite companions, should know where

she had bestowed herself. They went to her with a brilliant equipage, and made her golden offers to return amongst them ; but she scorned them all ; and when they talked of the past, shed tears and was subdued. But when they exposed her to the people with whom she lived, and had induced them to drive her out, she laughed, out of her firmness, at their imbecility ; and having no money, and nowhere to go, she wandered about and begged.

When Edward found this, he was satisfied, and consoled himself for the pain he had made her suffer, by his having been a participator in it. He watched where she went, threw a cloak round him, and passed by her, and she begged alms of him ; but turning his face suddenly upon her, and opening his cloak, she shrieked a recognition, and fell, embracing his knees.

So he carried home the weak penitent, and married her that day. And though many a mind will not admit it, yet is the truth not the less, she lived respected and loved by the good and wise ; reared an honourable family, and died, leaving the image of her virtue in the hearts of all her friends.



ALFRED OF ENGLAND,

AND THE FORCE OF LOVE.

AT the court of Alfred the Great, king of England, was a young nobleman, the son and heir of one of his wealthiest barons; allied to that great man, and bearing his name, Alfred. His father had been slain in a late battle, and had left him master of immense revenues.

This being soon after the expulsion of the Danes by the personal valour and great moves of the king, the government was somewhat weak, and the king sought to strengthen himself in the hearts of his subjects.

This young man, honouring the king's greatness, gave the whole of his riches into his hands, to farm for the use of the state, until it should be his pleasure to return them when they should cease to be needed. And as he

was of a gentle and passive disposition, he betook himself to a villa on the banks of the Thames; and there lived, entertaining his friends. Being, however, of a melancholy habit for one so young, and very thoughtful, his inclination led him to travel for relief. Having received a sufficient sum of the king, he departed, they mutually embracing and honouring each other. The young man, in answer to his sage advice, telling him only, "Sir, I bear your name."

Having passed through many countries, he came into Tuscany. The sun was setting; and as he went over the bridge into the city, the bells were ringing, and the sound of music was distinctly heard in the meadows and vintages. The doors of the houses were open, and all the place seemed as one family. His melancholy left him; and his heart warmed within him. He no longer pondered, or looked down, but alighted gaily from his horse, and shook the dust from the feathers in his hat, inquiring the while the reasons for the rejoicings. He was told that the duke had, three days since, married a noble and beautiful lady, who much loved him; and that they were to rejoice for seven days.

When the evening was come, Alfred did not,

as he might have done, challenge respect of the duke, but went into the hall as a common guest, and seated himself at the bottom of the table. There he sat, studying the favour of the duke, who was of a most noble appearance. His tanned cheek was freckled yellow with the sun ; his eye fiery, and dark as his hair ; and that curling heavily and as black as a crow. There hung a gold chain about his neck, and thereto a lady's likeness ; and a favour of lady's hair, as yellow as gold, was tied above his naked elbow. His shoulders were covered with a lion's skin ; his neck was bare and black with the sun of many a day : his belt was a chain of iron, and his kirtle of sable skins. Behind him stood dark boys, beautiful as Arcadians ; one bearing his cup and grapes, and the other resting as David on Goliath's sword. Soft music was heard from without, and the Tuscan spoke : his voice, was as the sound of the sea in a cave.

The trumpets sounded as he had commanded ; the sweet music passed under the battlements, and when the doors opened, and the duchess advanced, his eyes shot fire. Shaking back his hair, he advanced towards her with extended arms, moving like a leopard. When they embraced, and her yellow hair mingled with his

upon his back, they looked like images of the clouds.

Alfred's heart smote against his side, when he saw the beauty of that lady: he eat no meat, but still gazed upon her; nor did he crush any grapes, nor mingle any wine. He heard not, felt not, thought not. He hardly breathed. His senses were in his eyes. He was as one who is "gazing himself blind, by looking on the moon." All this while was his heart beating audibly, and he sat as quiet as a stone, till the feast was done. When the duke had led the duchess away, and the hall was cleared, he was aroused; and looking mournfully around, he sighed deeply, and departed weeping.

On the next day, he wrote to the king as follows.—

"KIND FATHER;

"It importeth my honour and my life, that I should be absent from your kingdom for some time; how long, I know not. I am a slave; but I serve those whom I most love, and do bless my bondage. I want no gold, therefore use my patrimony while you want it; when not, be it bestowed for the benefit of learning; giving to the church no more than it can demand. Though the tears I now shed are not mine, I do dedicate

one drop to the remembrance of old times. Be assured, that which I do at present is honourable, for I bear your name.

“ALFRED.”

Calling his only attendant to him, and giving him gold, he bade him carry the letter to the king of England; and by no means to return, as he should pass forthwith into Germany. And wringing him by the hand, they parted.

As soon as he was gone, Alfred changed his habit, took a herdsman's staff, went to the gates of the Duke of Tuscany and demanded to see him. Now the duke had just returned from hunting, and Alfred approached like a nobleman, but demanded of him only to be his servant or page. The duke, seeing the greatness of the man through the poorness of his habit, entertained him, and granted his request; and, liking his face, placed him close to his person. Presently the duchess came riding in, he spoke to her of what he had done; and when she saw Alfred, she approved it all. The duke desired him to help his lady from her horse; but he began to shake like a leaf, looked down, and was rooted to the ground. The duke unhorsed the lady, chiding Alfred for his poorness; he laying it to his new fortune, that had gladdened

him too much. Alfred soon took an opportunity to gain the duke's respect.

The duke and duchess, seeing continually the nobleness of his nature, grew kind to him ; and took him often by the hand, questioning him of his sorrowful aspect, and promising to relieve his misfortunes. They often asked his advice, and would have made him great ; but he refused it, liking his old office, and desiring nothing so much as to be opposite their countenances.

Thus did he live for ten years, under the affectionate notice of these two lovers (for neither time nor marriage had as yet weakened their hearts), when it happened that a Danish nobleman visited the court of Tuscany, with his daughter, a very beautiful girl. She seeing the nobleness of the duke fell violently in love with him ; and the duke seeing the nobleness of the prize, and feeling the power of his conquest, was guilty enough to return her passion ; forgetting the heart of the duchess. And because she should not know of his amour, he gave it out that both his guests would depart from his court, and ordered a feast to their honour. But he had secretly paid a weighty sum of gold to the Dane, that the lady, his daughter, should remain with him ; and on the night of her de-

parture she returned, and was received privily into a castle, that was in a wood, out of the city.

The delicate and susceptible nature of the duchess soon told her, that something perilous threatened her love. By the duke's manner and conduct, she could read a difference in his heart; yet could she by no means suspect the cause. Trusting, however, to his honour as well as she could, she stifled these feelings, and bent to all his humours; endeavouring by patient suffering to win him back to what he was. Yet did she never question him of the difference; nor even appear to know it, except by the greater tenderness of her conduct.

Alfred, who watched over the lady's happiness with the vigilance of a lynx; when he found the truth, hated the Tuscan, and dedicated himself by all means in his power to procure the duchess peace and tranquillity. Willingly would he have taken what the duke had cast aside; but he knew the duchess's nature, and her love for the duke, and he never divulged himself, nor the heavy secret of his heart.

When he saw the duchess sicken, and become pale, his heart ached for her; and he tried by all means in his power to make good the stories of the duke, when he excused himself for having been abroad all night, by saying, he had hunted

too far into the country, or that being sick he took a change of air. But her love for the duke could penetrate too easily through a veil so thin. She called a page to her, and said, "This evening my lord purposes to ride; bring me thy dress, and hide thou in my chamber. Fear not, I will stand betwixt thee and all harm." The page did as she had requested; and having disguised herself, she rode out with her husband, went with him to the castle, and staid there that night. Having seen all that had passed, she returned in the morning, broken-hearted; and shutting herself in her chamber, fell sick.

During this time, Alfred, who had been grieving for her, not knowing of what she had done, had planned to steal the lady from the castle, and carry her by force into England; and by that means once more bring the duke back again to his fair duchess; but ere his plan was ripe, more fatal matter ensued. The duchess never revealing to the duke, nor any other person, that she knew of his perfidy, determined to wait patiently till he should again think of her. But the continual pain was too much for her; and it wore her pale, and as thin as death. All this the duke saw, but it did not alter him; and Alfred was an equal sufferer with the duchess.

It chanced one afternoon, while the duke was with his syren, that Alfred was walking under the window of the duchess's chamber, thinking of the miseries of this world; when he heard her calling feebly to her maids, crying, "Help, help, I am dying." And they, being in a far chamber, and not hearing, Alfred climbed by the help of the vine into her chamber; and raising her in his arms, he said, "Pardon, dear lady, this intrusion to thy couch. What help will do thee good?" She knowing him to be so greatly her friend, and having a feeling for all his kindnesses, was satisfied; and said, "Oh! Alfred, nothing can help me but only Heaven. I am dying—dying of grief. My heart is broken. Oh! my husband." And she fainted from weakness. Alfred saw she was dying, and he grew as weak as a child; his throat ached, and his tears flowed till her hair was wet. And she lifted up her eyes once more, and died.

Having kissed her forehead, and murmured over her, he got down again by the vine: and he took two swords, and went into the woods; dumb with despair, but withal most wroth. There he lay all night under the trees, staring upon the sky; and early in the morning he betook him to the castle, and waited till the

duke came from his paramour. When he heard the hinges of the gate, and saw the head of the duke's steed coming forth, he went into the wood, and blew a blast of defiance upon his horn, which the duke answered.

They met upon a level plain, where the duke dismounted. And Alfred said to him, "Sir, I do arraign you here under heaven, of being the murderer of an innocent and beautiful lady.— Oh ! how most innocent and beautiful !"—I here stand the champion of your duchess, who is dead through the neglect of such a beast as you ; and thus I challenge you." And he struck him on the cheek, and offered him one of the swords. The giant, mad at the blow, seized upon the sword and attacked Alfred desperately ; but he being determined on having the life of the duke, defended himself suddenly.

When they had fought some time, Alfred struck him on the head ; he reeled against a tree, and fell. And seeing Alfred standing over him, he said, "Pause." Alfred replied, "Sir, you did not pause when your dear lady's life could have been saved through it. You have felt only for yourself, and have sacrificed her. When her pale look and aching eye have begged a merciful hour at your hand, you cared not for

her pain. And lastly, whilst your hot veins were swelling with delight, you let her poorly die. You sold her unto death for your enjoyments—a sacrifice. You did not pause; wherefore, as you lie upon your back in these nettles, I will not pause!” So saying, he took him by the wrist, and stabbed him to the heart, and so killed him.

And he went to the court, where the elders were assembled, waiting the duke's presence, to tell him of the death of his lady. Alfred walked in before them, and breaking his sword threw it on the ground; and after a short silence, he told them whose blood it was upon him, and what he had done. So they fell upon him, and bound him; while some went to the forest, and there found the duke upon his back, as he had said, stabbed through and through. They made a bier of twisted boughs, with loose leaves strewed over it, and brought the body into the hall.

They would not hear Alfred; but condemned him to be beheaded on the third day. But on the night of the second he died in his prison, of a broken heart.



THE PLAGUE.

QUANY years ago, there lived in London two brothers, possessed of an independent property which they inherited from their father, who died when they were young, and left them to the care of a guardian. They were educated in all needful learning, and every accomplishment fitting the estate of gentlemen, to which they were born.

After leaving the university, where they had diligently studied, they found themselves their own masters, in a world surrounded with pleasures which were at their command, on every hand were paths leading to different degrees of fame and honour, and only wisdom to direct their steps. As they had ever been prudent livers, not given to the dissolute habits of many of their fellow students, nor yet steeped in the pedantic affectation of learning, they knew how

to enjoy their fortunes with pleasure to themselves, and with benefit to mankind.

These two brothers were named Frederick and James, and having liberal hearts, they began to look out each one for a partner, to share the enjoyment of their prosperity; and so create a stock of happiness, from which they might mutually draw a permanent comfort. As they possessed comely persons and agreeable manners, they met with a kind reception from the fair sex; nor was it long before their affections were engaged. Frederick had fixed his heart on a beautiful young lady, of sprightly manners and sanguine temperament; and neither of them being disposed to trifle in so important a business as love, they were quickly married; much to the satisfaction of the young lady's friends, who were a rich and noble family.

Frederick lived happily with his wife, and in due time she crowned his happiness by giving birth to a son. But his joy was of short duration, for both mother and child died soon after, to his infinite sorrow.

James, in the meantime, had been ensnared by the proud beauty of a young damsel, who would by no means listen to his suit. His excessive love for her led him into a thousand extravagancies, and melancholy fancies; but the

more ardent he became, the more obdurate was the lady's heart ; till at length she gave the deathblow to his hopes, by marrying a wealthy lord (though herself but in middling circumstances). Thus she at once sealed his doom and her own misery ; for her husband was so passionate and wilful, that she never had a day's happiness with him.

The two brothers, finding themselves flouted by fortune, came to a resolution to stick by each other as long as they lived ; endeavour to forget their sorrows, and enjoy their estates while they had health and friends.

Let it not be supposed that this resolution tended to make them selfish, fretful, or out of favour with the world. No : their generous natures led them to distribute of their wealth to the poor and miserable ; their society was courted in all companies, and they lived as happily as two bachelors could do. -

About this time, that fierce and insatiable enemy of mankind, the plague, broke out in the city ; and daily increased, so much as to effect the whole constitution of society. Relations, ranks, situations, and distinctions of all kinds were forgotten in the general desolation ; great numbers of families left the town and took refuge in the woods, or open country ; shunning

their fellow creatures as they would wild beasts, so great was the dread of infection.

Amongst the few, who of their own free will did not forsake the city, were the two brothers, who, being prudent persons, had kept clear of the disorder. They, seeing the dreadful evil increased daily, put away all consideration of themselves (as they had no families depending upon them), and thought only how they might best employ the short remainder of their lives (which they held upon so precarious a tenure), as to be of service to their fellow men in this great calamity.

Accordingly they took all necessary precautions against the disease, and provided themselves with every possible remedy for, or preventive against it. They took council with the magistrates and physicians, exerting all their ability, and liberally contributing their property towards providing hospitals and medicine for the sick; and themselves visited infected houses, that if possible they might recover any; or, by removing the putrid carcasses, prevent its spreading farther. They took every care to keep off the infection, not out of a cowardly fear, nor so much from the natural instinct of self-preservation; but the more that they might indulge their humanity,

and be of service to the living, by contributing to the maintenance of good order, and enforcing the regulations of the government.

The younger of the brothers, in the course of his charitable duty, went to a churchyard, where was dug a large pit, into which the dead bodies were thrown indiscriminately every night by torch-light; and being prevented by the keeper of the gate from entering, for fear of contagion, he said, "I wish very much to see this sad spectacle, for I feel that my heart would be the better for it." The man zealously replied, "Go in then, for God's sake, and may you be preserved from the disorder."

He did enter; and the turmoil of his soul was gradually subsiding into a single feeling of prayer and pity, at the sight of such a mass of human imbecility and woe; when a faint, agonizing groan struck on his ear, and, on turning, he perceived, lying on her breast, a woman covered with rich drapery; not of gown or mantle, but the gawdy awning of some palace bed, of crimson, tinted and starr'd with gold, light glistening, as though mocking her wretchedness; this had been torn down to wrap its once proud owner from the wholesome light.

So heavv a torment is a visitation of this

nature, that vice and brutality become instruments of usefulness, and desirable helpmates

Beings of this cast were employed by the government, to go from house to house, and enter into all they could find, to clear them of the dead.

The door of this woman's house being open, they went in, and called, but no man answered to their voice; thus they paced from room to room, hearing no sound but their low and scanty talk, and the echo of their footfalls. The lord of the house had fled for safety; and those of his vassals who had remained were dead, and lay scattered about the several chambers. Amongst the rest, they took this lady from her bed; and covered her in what they could first get to hand, not caring to see if she were dead; and she being too sick to cry to them. Thus she had reached the churchyard, and when they were in the act of shooting the bodies from the cart, sudden agony gave her a moment's strength, and she groaned aloud; which the keeper of the gate hearing, he, out of his subdued nature, took her from this nest of death, and placed her further from it till she should be quite dead.

James, whose heart was devoted to the needs of the first individual, whether prince or beggar, tenderly lifted her from the ground, and carried

her farther off where some trees grew; and folding his mantle over the turfy mound of some undistinguished grave, he made her thus a pillow; one bed serving for the dying and the dead. Judge then of his feelings when he removed the covering, and saw the face on which he had doted in ardent youth; which had still been the daily companion of his thoughts.

Yet no angry thought escaped him to the dethroner of all his hopes; no cruel pride, at seeing the beauteous lily of his fancy brought thus low at his despised feet; nothing but tears, and melting sorrow at her misery.

He spoke in a low and anxious tone to her; her tongue was still, her mouth dry. He busied himself with a humane trembling, to make her bed more easy; stripping off his clothes to cover her (for she was naked but for this shroud), and gathered her hair that was displayed abroad. Thus he sat, ever and anon busied in little hurried offices of humanity; and watching, by the flare of the torch, the effects which followed on her thin features at every opening and shutting of her heavy eyes. He perceived every now and then that anxiety, and a desire to communicate, overcame the slothful agony that absorbed her; her lips would uncurve from

their sickly melancholy, but no speech followed; she was too weak.

He well knew she was past all help and all relief; so he summoned his patience and fortitude, and fearlessly putting her hand in his, questioned her after such a manner as required only some small sign for his quick apprehension to discover her meaning. By this he learnt, that her only son was at home, secured from the infection; but must necessarily be starving, as his provisions were all gone. She would have had him gone on the instant; but he comforted her with promises and hopes, and would not stir from her.

Soon after, she fixed her eyes upon his face, with a soft and lovely mildness of expression; the energy of which swift reflex of her youthful beauty overcame all her heavy agony—it passed—she feebly pressed his fingers, and her eyes became as dull as stone. She died, and her hand grew cold in his. He got up soon, crying like a child; carried her heavy body to a private place, and buried it under two young yew trees; nor did he rise from his knees directly his work was done, but crossed his arms fervently upon his breast, and bent his head to the ground; and for some time so he remained rapt.

At length arising, he went cheerfully and

diligently to find from what house she had been brought (he never knowing where she had bestowed herself after her marriage); and by much untiring exertion, he gained the wished-for information.

He flew from chamber to chamber of the house, shouting, but in vain; at length he paused in the room which this dear lady of his heart had inhabited, fully resolved to do her wish with all his human power, as if she were alive and again desired it. He called, a feeble voice moaned an answer; and on breaking through the partition, he discovered the weak object of his search, starving, and apparently dying. With sagacious precaution, with watching, and with care, he saved his life, and eventually succeeded in conveying him safe from the city; the success of which more followed from his faith than his power to do.

In the end, this young man came to his wealth and honours; but unfortunately, he had imbibed all the tyranny and self-will of his father, with the pride and wayward cruelty of his mother. He soon quarrelled with his benefactor, and drove him away; treating him with the hatred of his father, and the cruel contempt of his mother. Still, however, the old affection was in grain; and the grey-headed James often

succoured and shielded him, when the other little thought of it. His father never was heard of; and, doubtless, he met what he most sought to fly from.

You will perhaps wonder how either of these gentlemen escaped the infection, while so actively employed in their labour of love. Yet it is often seen, that the most careless in extreme danger are preserved, while those who seek nothing but a selfish safety are struck by the hand of chance

Or is it that death is proud, and will not evult in a sudden conquest over one who seeks him not, but turns not away; over one who hates, but hardly fears him?

At length the plague gradually disappeared from the city; and the inhabitants, who had escaped its ravages, were for the rest of their lives the better men and women in their respective relations in society.

These two brothers had spent nearly all their patrimony in the work of benevolence; and they lived a retired life upon the little remainder of their once ample fortunes. They worked while their strength lasted, to obtain a provision for their old age; drawing cheerfulness from the inward satisfaction of their good intentions, and looking for their reward at the

hands of a merciful Providence. Frederick always found comfort at the grave of his departed lady.

They lived together to a happy old age, respected and beloved by all who knew them; and a blessing followed them to their graves.





DION,

A KING OF THE OLDEN TIME.

PYRRHUS, the king of Epirus, was a most ferocious warrior, who besieged the cities of Antigonus, that he might get booty and pillage enough to attack the countries of Italy and Sicily.

Thus Plutarch hath a memorable passage of his death.

“Pyrrhus, seeing the billows and the tempest rolling about him, took off the plume by which his helmet was distinguished, and gave it to one of his friends. Then, trusting to the goodness of his horse, he rode in among the enemy, who were harassing his rear; and was accidentally wounded through the breast-plate with a javelin. The wound was neither dangerous nor large; but he turned against the man that gave it, who was an Argive of no note, the son of a poor old

woman. This woman, among others, looking upon the fight from the roof of a house, beheld her son thus engaged. Seized with terror at the sight, she took up a large tile with both hands, and threw it at Pyrrhus. • The tile fell upon his head, and, notwithstanding his helmet, crushed the lower vertebrae of his neck. Darkness in a moment covered his eyes, his hands let go the reins, and he fell from his horse by Lacyminius's tomb. The crowd around him did not know who he was: but one Zopyrus, who served under Antigonus, and two or three others, coming up, recognized him, and dragged him into a porch near at hand, just as he was beginning to recover from the blow. Zopyrus had drawn his Illyrian blade to cut off his head, when Pyrrhus opened his eyes, and gave him so fierce a look, that he was struck with terror. His hands trembled, and between his desire to give the stroke, and his confusion, he missed his neck, and only wounded him in the mouth and chin, so that it was a long time before he could separate the head from the body.

“By this time the thing was generally known, and Alcioneus, the son of Antigonus, came hastily up, and asked for the head, as if he wished only to look upon it. But as soon as he had gotten it, he rode off with it to his

father, and cast it at his feet, as he was sitting with his friends. Antigonus, looking upon the head, and knowing it, thrust his son from him, and struck him with his staff, calling him an odious and a barbarous wretch. Then, putting his robe before his eyes, he wept in remembrance of the fate of his grandfather Antigonus, and that of his father Demetrius, two instances in his own house of the mutability of fortune. As for the head and body of Pyrrhus, he ordered them to be laid in magnificent attire upon the funeral pile, and burned. After this, Alcioneus meeting with Helenus, in deep distress and shabby apparel, addressed him courteously, and conducted him to his father; who said, 'In this my son, you have acted much better than before, but still you are deficient: for you should have taken off that mean habit, which is a greater disgrace to us the victors, than it is to the vanquished.'" Thus hath the pen of old Plutarch well anatomized the great motives of a heart of what is called the barbarous ages.

The times are altered. Where is the daring and ambitious Pyrrhus, that conquered one kingdom as the footstool to another? Napoleon Buonaparte comes nearer the old story than any other; for the sinew of his policy was not restraint. Though he be down (like Hector

among the Myrmidons) yet we can but remember him—he hath left his marks. Where is the bloody trick—the impassioned spirit of Alcyoneus? And above all, where is the great and gentle Antigonus? Gone; and it is feared never to meet upon a gory field again.

Vapid, feverish, hectic policy, strikes inward. "The keen knife sees not the wound it makes." There, all blows were outward. Nature had its full sway. The scales of fate were ever in motion; sometimes humanity came down, tyranny sometimes, and power: now they pause. Passion and nature both kick the beam, and crafty power with its leaden hand chokes the sweet breath of liberty; while pursy policy looks on and laughs: to see it makes us sick, and we could almost wish that "Chaos were come again."

This story is like an alto relievo, not a print, it stands out from the surface. It has the passion, the dignity, and nature of the Elgin Marbles. Search back the Chronicles, and let us see an Antigonus, an Alcyoneus, or a Pyrrhus of our own. Time hath forgotten it.

Thus, it should seem, there was once a time when great men could do great things, and were not the empty bubbles of the day, but made time seal to their names. Such an one was the

ancient king of Thrace; which the following story will fully show.

It was the fate of this king Dion to be enamoured of a young lady, the daughter of the greatest noble in his kingdom, and royally related; and being of sound honour, and respecting woman's honesty, he would have married her. It happened once, when all his nobles were assembled, and she had done all in her power to interest him; that having put a passion in his eye by mixing much wine, she fell suddenly to playing with a lock of his hair, and said playfully, "Will you give me this?" And he said, "Ask not for so poor a thing as this, I say I will give thee anything." She replied archly, "Aye, with proviso that it be any but the thing I ask." And he was enraged, and said vehemently, "By Heaven, and the white favour of thy hand, I will give unto thee anything within my power that thou wilt demand." She said aloud, "Notice, his words are registered in Heaven; and hear you lords, I here demand the head of old Lycurgus." When the king heard it he bit his lips; and, casting his eyes to where Lycurgus sat, fell into a fit of musing.

Now Lycurgus was a statesman, and a great friend of Dion's, who loved him for his equity and gentle manners, and had a debt of gratitude

to him for his good and wise conduct. These ambitious lords hated him with a deadly hatred, for the place he held above them in Dion's heart; but more because he could penetrate into all their secret motives, and counteract them without exchanging a word; and they had all sworn to hunt him down, and be rid of him.

Dion, who had heard something of this, now saw plainly that the woman was the instrument by which they would work this miracle; for they dared not do it without his leave, and to have had that would have been one. So he rose up with a resolved soul, and said, "Woman, why hast thou damned thyself?" And she asked, "What means my lord?" He replied, "Why dost thou demand the grey head of that old man? Why a request so bloody from those lips, to forfeit for it a throne?" She answered, "The kings used not to jest with their oaths. You tacked to my request no such condition." But the lords interposed, and said, "Lady, you run before the king. He means not to retract; the honour of majesty is too sacred." And Dion said aloud, "Lycurgus, come thou and sit upon my right hand." Then he called his champion, and bade him sound a defiance, and prepare himself to meet any who should oppose

his command, which was, Lycurgus's life and the retraction of his word.

The champion (who was a young nobleman of great spirit, and one of the faction against Lycurgus) rose, and being encouraged by them, sent his page with his sword, saying, "He was used to fight defending the king's word, and that he never had been the champion of dishonour." And the king said, "It is well; I have deserved all this for the folly of my promise." Then calling in his guards (having set some over Lycurgus for his safety) he ordered them to clear the banquet table, and make a ring with their pikes. This being done, he descended; and setting up his warlike shield, retreated behind it, and armed himself completely; then coming into the list of spears, he said, "Come, thou warrior, I will be mine own champion, and win back the honour I have wasted, or shed my royal blood upon the metal of thy sword. Lycurgus is old, and cannot fight for his own life; I am young, and as a king, am bound to protect my subjects." For a moment, the champion was daunted at being opposed to the arm of majesty; but being encouraged by the lords, and flattered with their compliments and promises, he discarded fear, and addressed himself to defend. • And the king said, "Set

thy teeth, young man, you fight for life; for one of us shall die "

The battle lasted long, for the champion was young, of great courage and power; but the king was a king, fighting for the life of a subject. The champion wounded the king over his shield slightly, but Dion struck him on the head so that he staggered backwards, swinging his sword like a flail, in half his senses. And the king cried out, "Lycurgus, fear not, I am not hurt. My life for thine, old man, thou shalt live." He then fell upon the champion and wounded him; and beat him upon the spears, so that the soldiers hoisted him up. And the king said, "Toss him to the birds, for he is no champion, but a traitor." And as the king passed by the lords, he put his beaver up, casting on them a look of contempt; and shaking his sword above his head, he sprinkled the blood upon their faces. Their great meanness was apparent, and they were ashamed to look up.

Then Dion ordered them to kneel before him, and said to them, "You see, great lords, I have unthreaded this matter (however cunning was the woof you wove), and preserved my life and honour. I know to the scruple what several parts you have held in this rebellion; and thus I shall reward you. For enticing the sacred

word of your king, through unmanly means, to lay the death upon a worthy and loved citizen, for setting a sworded champion against us, and putting the life and honour of your king in danger by craft and violence; my sentence should be death, sudden death by these my soldiers here—it is forgiveness. You, madam, who should have filled our arms, we have found you out betimes. We banish you the limits of our kingdom. We do not like you: you are grown immodest and sue for blood. Go, we foresee thou wilt be some dangerous paramour.”

The nobles rose, full of contrition, and ashamed, through the nobleness of Dion. And the king said to Lycuigus, “Go thou down also, and kneel at our footstool. None but our royal hand did give thee thy great honours, and none but it shall take them off; they were graced by thee, and did become thee, noble friend, as the leaves the oak. I find thee too good for them; I here take off thy offices, appointments, and thy state. Arise, a common man; and come into these arms, my poor, but honest father. And hear, ye lords, he is nothing now. Spit out the serpent from your spleenful lungs; take him among you, and make much of him. I commend him to your loves, as you to me.” The lords being humiliated; and the cause

being gone with his posts and offices that made him great, they were friends with him.

And the king sent for Lyncurgus soon at night, and said to him, "My Atlas, be not angry with me that I have deprived thee of thy crown of oak, but these dogged lords would one day have lapped thy blood, though it had been through my heart, and the hearts of all my subjects. By Mars we missed it rarely. But hate is not so great as love." Lyncurgus fell on his knees, and shedding tears on the king's hand, said, "Thou great man, I have no means to thank thee." And Dion said, "Tut, tut, thou art my Atlas still. My power shall serve for yours; and the ambitious, vain, and politic fools will hear alone the thunder in my tongue, and know not you command it: will see alone the lightning in my eye, and know not who did aim it. Their dooms lay in the corner of thy mouth. Wink thou, and their graves are digged. As boys with flies, so shalt thou pull and pinch them. Aye, by this old wrinkled hand." And so he went out talking to him.





HERBERT THE EXILE;

OR, THE POWER OF HUMANITY.

IN the reign of Charles the First, an English gentleman named Herbert, of a most humane and noble nature, was obliged to fly his country for having secreted and preserved the life of a traitor. He departed from his native earth, leaving all his wealth and honours behind, taking with him as the companions of his banishment an honest heart, a pure conscience, and an only son about six years of age, the hope of his existence.

He fled into America, then an almost unknown country; and sought an asylum amidst the trackless forests of that wild continent. Here he built himself a hut, and lived in a happy exile from the world and its concerns. No turmoil of state affairs, news of battles, or

court intrigues, or the more petty jealousies and prejudices of society, ever disturbed his comfortable solitude. He could think of them, and even of the pleasant side of the picture, without repining at his lot ; and they afforded him matter for calm speculation. For his disgust was excited at the tyranny and sycophancy of the great , while his heart was too big to allow him to become a labourer, or a beggar among the poor.

All his joy and consolation was in the education of his child, who, as a mirror, reflected in his heart and countenance the virtues and disposition of his father. Their days passed in a continual flow of cordial affection and uninterrupted enjoyment, every sun ripening the early bud of promise ; while in the father's mind, the mellow retrospect of gone years was cheered by the burning hope of new prospects, like the fresh blades of grass peering through the faded spoils of Autumn.

It chanced one day, that the youth had strayed farther into the woods than usual, when suddenly a bear rushed out and destroyed him. The father missed him, and as evening approached his fears increased ; he ran up and down in frantic grief calling him by name, but was only answered by the dull echo of his own

voice, or the howlings of wild beasts at a distance. Armed with his trusty weapons, with a torch in his hand, he wandered through the more open part of the woods; fearless of danger, and thinking only of his dear boy, he pryed into every cave and bush in search of him; and with a wearied body, but active and agonized mind, passed the remnant of the night. When morning came he penetrated into the thickest part of the woods, and pursued his search with the vigilance of one whose whole heart was in his purpose; but all in vain.

At last, his body exhausted by fatigue, and his mind worn out with anxiety, he sunk down and slept unquietly for several hours. He awoke to feel his desolate condition in all its horrors, and but for his faith in a supreme Providence, would have ended his miserable life. He was become the silent image of despair, and sat for hours on the ground without motion, brooding over his misery. But this melancholy pleasure could not last; his mind fell short of the intensity of his passion, and when he had once lost the clue of his thoughts, his affections became a chaos, and he was no longer able to subdue them to the consideration of the beloved object. At last he came to himself, and was quietly resigned to his hard fate; the vio-

lence of his grief subsided into a calm, and he bore his affliction patiently.

The tree under which his child had spent many happy hours he loved to visit, and tried to transfer his affection to the inanimate object. The books which his child had read, the tools he had handled, he grew fond of; and he was wont every day to pluck a sprig from the shrub which his child had planted, and carry it in his bosom. This was but a cold comfort, a faint enjoyment. He had throned in his heart the spirit which was now gone from him for ever, and it was empty of all but grief. In all this he cared not to return to the world, but loathed it as the author of his misfortunes, choosing rather the wilderness, and his old thoughts, than its good and bad.

How long he would have lived in this hard struggle is doubtful; but it could not have been long, had not the following incident turned the tide of his sorrow.

As he was one day taking a lonely walk, wrapt in his melancholy thoughts, he heard a faint cry; he started, and looking round, saw a man stretched on the ground, wasted almost to a skeleton, and hardly alive. He carried him home to his hut, where he gave him food, and with much care restored him to life. This was

the only human being he had seen since he had lived in the woods, except his son; and now that he was gone, the sight of a fellow-creature was like awaking from the dead. He looked upon this man as his son; and his heart having been left destitute of a kindred object for its yearning affection, now swelled with love for this poor traveller.

This man had been a soldier, and was of a very fierce and cruel disposition, oppressive to his fellow men; engrafting upon a naturally self-willed disposition all the violent and blood-thirsty rapacity, so well sanctioned by the legal deeds and business of his life. When he perceived the excessive kindness shown to him, instead of feeling grateful to his benefactor, he thought only how he might turn his yielding temper and humane disposition to his own selfish advantages. Therefore he assumed a tone of authority, and gave way to his passion on any occasion, without cause, just as his humour swayed him; appearing quite insensible to the benevolent intentions and actions of Herbert, who, having saved his life and provided for his support, still continued this thankless labour of humanity.

So they lived together; more like master and servant than two fellow creatures, who having

no society but their own, were now become equals, whatever their former condition might have been. And here, he, who owing his life to his neighbour should rather have been inferior (if there were any distinction between them), assumed the superior in outward manner and behaviour. But his neighbour was far above him in the greatness of his soul. Therefore let it not be thought a want of spirit in Herbert thus to have submitted to the wanton humours of his companion ; his patience brought with it its own great reward.

The love he once had for his son, he now fixed on this unworthy object ; when he lingered about the tree, as reminding him of his child, he sought for no sympathy save in the recollection of past endearments ; but now that he loved one from whom he hoped for a return, or at least an acknowledgment of his affection, and found it not, it was a chilling disappointment ; but yet it could not divert his fixed attachment. He was content in the conscious satisfaction of his good intentions, and the singleness of his aim. Thus he soothed his troubled mind, and was quiet and happy.

Herbert being one day out in the woods, had heard the noise of wild beasts near him ; and hastened back, bidding his companion beware

of going near the place ; but he, being obstinate, and not caring to take the advice thus humanely offered him, instead of thanking him, only laughed at what he called his idle caution, and being armed with a hatchet, would have gone into the wood. Herbert (more anxious for the other's safety than his own life) tried to prevent him ; when the brute, impatient at the stop, struck him with his fist. Staggered, not so much by the force of the blow as by such inhuman conduct, Herbert stood astonished ; and, quite overcome by the shock, burst into tears ; but returned not the blow, nor any word of complaint. The savage was tamed in a moment ; and fell down at his feet, embracing his knees, and with many tears begged his forgiveness.

Such were the fruits of a change, instantaneous indeed, but deep and true. From that time these two lived like brothers ; the soldier by his altered behaviour giving daily proof of his lively contrition of heart.

Such a controlling power has gentleness over the most depraved of human beings.



THE TWO KNIGHTS AND LADY OF CYPRUS;

OR, LOVE AND DEATH.



IN the island of Cyprus there lived a man of great wealth and power, having only one daughter, called Cleone. This lady, being young and very beautiful, was desired often in marriage; but never having met with any man, whose wife she would wish to become, and from her exalted rank feeling that she could always cull from the flower of the youth of Cyprus, she chose to indulge in that sort of power called maiden pride; though it might be some sacrifice made to Dian, that would often more willingly have been paid to Venus.

It happened, however, that two knights of great bravery and accomplishments, and of

equal degree, made suit to her ; and her father, tired of her fickleness, had resolved that she should become the bride of one or other of them. Arsaces was a man of proud and haughty temperament, who did not love the lady (favouring himself in his own idea that he was above that passion), but who sought her hand only as it suited his family honour to be matched with her ; and because a wife was a necessary part of his establishment. Not so the too affectionate and sensitive Lyches. He loved the lady to the depth of his soul, but was of so delicate a nature, that meeting with no encouragement from her, he never secured courage, or overcame his embarrassment enough, to tell her the real state of his heart. And she, thinking him a mere idle as well as bashful suitor, passed him over lightly, giving him no hope or advantage above his rival.

Matters were enveloped in this error, when the youths made their joint claims upon the father's attention ; who, sending for his daughter, said to her, "Madam, when I told you it was my intention that you should marry one of these two noblemen, I was in earnest with you ; and I call you at this time before me, that you may make choice of which your heart desires most." She answered, "Seeing you are so serious in

this affair, and that you are resolved upon making me the wife of one of these gentlemen, I must leave the choice to you, or their own decisions ; as I like neither of them well enough to have him as a husband, and certainly have not a shadow of choice." She hoping by this means to overreach her father's intentions. But he reproved her for her presumption, and added, "I hold it proper that you two cast lots forthwith, to decide which of you shall have the taming of this wanton."

To this Arsaces consented ; but Lyches, fetching a deep sigh, and looking piteously in the lady's face, said, "The gods forbid, that a lady whom I so deeply love should be lost or won so lightly. I will draw no lots but those of life and death ; and shall account my life as a trifle, if spent in her sweet service." Then turning to Arsaces, he said, "As we are both knights and gentlemen well skilled in arms, and have nursed our days upward on the Cyprian grape, I hold it meet that I challenge you to fight a battle of death to one or both, in one week's space from this day." And the lady interposing, said, "Father, I require of you the privilege just offered me. My eyes are now open, and there needs no trial of strength or valour. Lyches, I do desire you for my hus-

band." Arsaces, seeing the meanness of his pretensions compared with his rival's, was wroth; and called upon Cleone's father to witness the challenge that had been offered him, and that he accepted it; demanding in honour that he would dispose of Cleone to none but the victor. To this he agreed; so they parted till they should try their fortunes on the seventh day.

Cleone now seeing into the heart and passion of Lyches, became from great indifference to be deeply in love with him; despising Arsaces to an equal degree, and grieving at her folly in not having discovered the affection of Lyches. And she besought her father to assist her; saying, "If Lyches should be vanquished in the fight, I shall consider myself his murderer; and never can embrace the man who could shed the blood of one who loves me so tenderly, and whom I have taught myself to cherish in the bottom of my heart." But he would not listen to her; telling her, her fancy was so fickle, that it would change again before the day of trial; and wishing it were past, that the trouble he had had on her account might be at an end. Cleone, seeing no remedy, waited in bitter pain the event.

At length the time arrived; and the parties being noble, the king presided, and all the gal-

lantry of Cyprus was there. Cleoné sat at the king's right hand in all her beauty ; but veiled in tears and sorrow. After a long fight, Ilyches was favoured as the victor ; but striking furiously at the neck of his adversary with his sword, it fell on his helmet, and dashed into a thousand splinters. Thus being unarmed, his foe levelled at his throat, calling on him to yield or die.

Ilyches, mad and overwhelmed with the fatality of his evil fortune, cast off his helmet, stamped upon it, and went out of the lists, beating his forehead with the handle of his broken sword, so that the blood flowed down upon the ground. Having unarmed, he ran into a wood hard by, grinding his teeth and foaming at the mouth like a mad beast, ever and anon pausing, and groaning like a dying man ; and sitting himself under a tree, he fell into a fit of the bitterest agony. At length evening came on ; and knowing they were to be married that night, he leaped upon his feet, and said, " I have made my account with fate, and since I loathe life, and have but a few hours to breathe, I will endeavour to stand this last trial, fiery as it is." So taking the dress of a servant, he mixed with those at the altar, where his lady was to be given to his enemy ; determining to see her for the last time. When he saw Arsaces, the fury of his spleen

smouldered in him like a fire ; but when he saw the white hand of Cleone put into that of the eager Arsaces, and looked into her face, his knees knocked together. Catching to a pillar behind the altar, he leaned there, sweating, till the dewy drops oozed through his hair, and he was as weak as a new yeaned lamb. Unable to look up, he stood so till all was over.

But there was one who knew him, Cleone ; who felt in the corner of her heart a lingering hope that he might be there ; and would have been willing that he should storm the hall with swords, and carry her off in spite of fate. So subtle are the workings of this god of love, that she espied him instantly, and pined for a deliverance.

If Cleone could for a moment have forgotten the wish to rebel against her present situation, the sight of Lyches in so deplorable a condition on her account would have revived it.

Being led off by the bridegroom into the great hall, where a nuptial feast was prepared, she behaved herself with calmness and fortitude, arising out of the secret determination she had come to in her own mind. When the night came, and her maids were ready to lead her to her bridal bed, she departed with them ; and they having burnt spices and sweet scents in her

chamber, and scattered it with flowers (after the fashion of those times with the brides), undrest her, and would have summoned the bridegroom to her chamber. But she, being on her guard, spoke to them after this manner: "You that are maids must feel full well the seriousness of my situation, and however sweet the present raptures may appear to you, yet there will be a time when they may be remembered with regret, and when common sympathy and happiness may not exist between my husband and myself: for how many married do you see daily who loathe each other's company, or live grudgingly together, who made the same boastful and joyous way to each other's arms that we do now. I therefore request you to leave me alone but a little, that I may utter a short prayer to the goddess of concord; so that my after years may be replete with happiness, and the pulse of this present time of joy grow not stagnant and dead." They did obeisance to her, and immediately withdrew, leaving her alone, and forbearing as yet to call Arsaces to her.

When they were gone, she fastened the door, and going to the window, where was a balcony leaning over into the garden, she cast a mantle round her, bracing it with a girdle; and let herself down by a pillar of the balcony, securing

herself by the climbing plants that grew round it. When she had descended into the garden, she struck immediately into the shade of some olive trees that grew hard by, as the moon was shining as bright as silver on every thing.

Now Lyches, supposing he had seen the end of all earthly happiness, threw away his disguise, and wandered with slow and miserable steps from the bridal hall into the garden, without knowing whither he went; and coming to a nook where some trees grew over and formed a roof, he threw himself down. After some time, his despair came upon him in all its fierceness, so that he cursed himself and his faithless sword, and the supreme gods! picturing in his mind, with lively horror, his loved lady in the arms of his rival. He could bear the malicious torment no longer; so drawing his dagger he plunged it into his bosom, and fell bleeding upon his side. •

Now fate, who sporteth more wantonly and heartlessly with the lives of lovers (knowing their feeling to be of the deepest) than any others, brought Cleone to the front of this arbour; when, the light shining, she discovered him to whom her soul was dedicated, and whom she most desired to behold. Cleone, in the suddenness of her joy, thinking of nothing but

flight and happy days, knelt down, and taking Lyches by the hand, shook him, saying, "Away thou demon of despair! Awake my love, arise, and let us fly! Though I am the wife of Arsaces, my heart can own to heaven no other lord but thee. Come then, thou dearer prized than life, let us fly unto ~~some~~ unknown shore: let us live on nature's orts; on berries of the tree, and waters of the well: this will be sweet with thee; with thee I want no rich man's feasts." And she endeavoured to rouse him. He strove to rise, but could not, so that he fell heavily in her arms: she, feeling his blood trickle down her breast, guessed well the secret, and shuddered in silence. Then kissing him, she said, "Art thou wounded to death? Can I relieve thee, or do thee good?" And straining her to his bosom, he said, "Oh! dearer far than life, thy presence comes too late. This rash right hand of mine has robbed us of the many golden years that might have been. I had not faith enough in thee. Would I had known the greatness of thy love. Oh! Cleone—I am dying." And he moaned with agony of soul, so that Cleone drew him to her lap, and hushed and soothed him like a child, ever and anon kissing his dull eyes, his forehead, or his cheeks, and weeping on his face.* And he said to her,

"Oh ! forgive me that when I was thy wooer I was so backward to declare my love." She said, "Still wilt thou make me weep ? If you request forgiveness, what need I, who was blind to the tender yearnings of thy heart ? I, who heedlessly put thee in the hands of violence by waging thy life ? I, who repented—oh ! too, too late. Alas !—poor wretch, I shall go mad." And Lyches said, "Cleone, kiss me, I prythee, I am dying." So he strained her to his bosom, and breathed his last upon her lips. She dried up her tears, and laid him on the ground ; and lying down beside him, cast her arms about him ; and the moon shining upon his face, she thus lay watching him.

Now the maids, after waiting some time, finding that the bride gave no signal, came to the door ; and seeing it made fast they alarmed the bridegroom, and her father, and the guests, who breaking into her chamber found it deserted, and the window wide open. Arsaces began to curse Lyches, muttering vengeance against him ; and taking torches they went into the garden, where the truth soon appeared to them. Lyches lay dead, and weltering in his blood ; and Cleone at his side with a placid face, her head lying on his bosom, and her arms about his neck : the one dead of his wound, the other of extreme grief.

Thus ended the unhappy and wayward fortunes of these two lovers. But the chances and circumstances arising to others through their deaths, are of import in themselves, and will need another tale.





THE NOBLE SLAVE.



NOW it so happened, that Cleone (who with her lover fell a victim to the wantonness of that celestial demon, Love) had in her train of slaves, one to whom she had shown all respect and kindness, seeing him to be a young man of great spirit and honour, and notwithstanding his servile origin and station, stuffed with all the natural qualities fit to make a great man. In proportion as he felt the oppression of his servitude and the scorn of others, so much the more was he grateful to this lady, and devoted to her honourable service.

Cleone, having all the fears of her situation about her, and having had enough to do with fortune to dread the event of the dispute between her lovers, called this slave to her, and putting his freedom into his hand, said to him, "Eros, as I am so circumstanced in my affairs

that my life may end upon the sudden, I have one request to make of you before the hand of fate may complete its work. And, for I like your nature, and think you great in honesty, I descend from the many lordly friends that I have, and rather trust the desire of my heart to thy hands, than theirs who think so much of themselves. My request is this, that if my lover should be slain in this combat, or die by any means on my account, I beseech of you, when both our bodies are burned (for I will not outlive him), to mix our ashes both in one urn, that our remains may be together in death, though we could not embrace each other during our lives." And Eros said, "Indeed, madam, the fatality of your situation touches me to the heart. I hope your death is not at hand: but, whatever may befall, I will never dishonour your confidence in this matter. Your request shall be faithfully done." She was satisfied; and held out her hand to him, which he kissed: so they parted.

When Cleone was gone, Eros opened the packet; and finding his freedom in it, and also an order for some gold, his eyes swam with tears of gratitude, and his heart swelled as he strode about shouting the word "Liberty!" Then falling suddenly on his knees, he vowed

never to desert his lady if she lived ; or if she died, to do strictly her request.

Now the king was a young man of most licentious passions ; and seeing the great beauty of Cleone, as she sat beside him during the combat, he desired her, and from that moment was madly bent on possessing her ; wishing nothing so much as that the champions should kill each other. But seeing the issue of the fight, he prepared a plan to surprise the bride on a sudden and to carry her off, and all this would have happened, had she not fled from her husband's house as she did. When the king heard of her escape, he sent in search of her to Lyches's house, fancying she had gone to him ; so that her death prevented her from becoming a victim to this ruffian.

When they were found dead in the garden, the king in great wrath ordered their bodies to be brought to him ; and commanded his servants to bring scented wood into the garden, to pile it up, and scatter spices and sweet gums upon it, and there burn the body of the lady. He deposited her ashes in a golden urn, and ordered it to be placed by his seat in his chamber ; saying, " As I affected this lady in my lifetime, so will I have this urn always by my side, that I may soften my remembrance of her."

Her husband, stung at her preference of Lyches, was glad of this, and made no claim upon the king for her remains. And the king called some of his people to him, and said, "As for the body of Lyches, take it and cast it over the wall, and let it lie there; for it was he who caused the death of this lady, whom I so pine after: wherefore if he were alive I would take his life; but being dead, I will throw his body to the beasts of the forest, and the birds of the wilderness." So they took the body, and did as they were commanded.

Now it happened, that Eros was walking out of the city, meditating on what way to work upon the king; and passed soon after Lyches had been cast over the wall. Knowing it to be him, he could not conceive the reason for so strange a thing; so covering him over in the weeds and nettles that grew by, he went into the city, and mingled with the officers of the king, to learn the truth of this matter, and how best to fulfil his promise.

Having found out the truth, he passed the gates of the city before dusk, when they were shut upon him; and going to the place, took the body on his shoulders, and carried it into a forest hard by, and there burnt it. He gathered the ashes together, and secured them carefully;

and in the morning he took the gold that the lady had given him, and bought with it an urn of the most costly worth it would purchase, saying to himself, "I cannot do greater honour in this affair, than to garnish this lady's desire with her own generosity. As she could die for this youth, she must have loved him greatly; and I will do all to honour him in my power, so that her spirit shall not be grieved. As I hope for a fair life for the future, my promise to her shall be performed; unless the gods themselves forbid it" Having done this, he buried the urn in the earth, and went into the city.

He presented himself before the king, and told him of the lady's desire, and of his promise; saying, "If you love the lady, the greatest respect you can show to her is to attend to her last decree." But the king would not hear it; and when Eros urged the matter to the utmost, arguing the injustice and impiety of a refusal, the king ordered him to be carried out and instantly whipped. For this, Eros (whose spirit was ready to burst) swore eternal vengeance; and finding nothing could be done by honest means, he conceived a stratagem to steal away the urn from the king's chamber, and so execute his purpose. But fortune had still sourer malice

towards him : he was taken in the attempt, and cast into a dungeon.

In the middle of the night, a principal officer of the king's came to him with two guards, with an intention to strangle him ; but he seeing his life was in danger, struggled so much that the guards could not kill him, and the officer himself came to their assistance. Eros, dashing out the torch, broke from them, so that they seized the officer, and strangled him in the dark by mistake ; whilst he (from his great jeopardy become most sensitive) went straight to the gate of the dungeon (though it was pitch dark), and turning the key upon those within, threw it away and made his escape. And he fled out of Cyprus, and lived upon the seaside among the rocks.

After some months he fell into the hands of a party of pirates, who had formed into a band ; and, having two vessels, lived by attacking and making prize of the wealth and persons of the different merchants who traded that way. To this turn of fortune he had no objection, seeing that by some management he might get to the head of them, and govern them ; and not only do much good by restraining the wanton cruelty of which many of them were guilty, but would also have it in his power to perplex the king.

They soon found he could plan and execute better than any one amongst them ; and that by his wit he had saved them from some fatal disasters. They therefore made him their chief, and invested him with absolute authority ; and though they all thought him too merciful and lenient, yet not one of them dared to tell him so.

After some time, the king's conduct went to so painful a degree of violence, that many of his subjects fled from him ; and any who stood in his way to a favourite design, were immediately banished ; so that numbers, from one cause or another, went from the city daily. Eros finding this, took every means to bring the distressed to his party ; and gave himself out as the redresser of their wrongs. When the king found him to be the slave who had escaped from him, his fury was great ; he ordered his officers to take an army and fetch him in, and slay all that were found along with him. When Eros heard this, he sent some of his men to the top of the rocks to hide themselves ; and preparing all his ships, drew them up close, and out of sight, and went into a hollow ; so that he lured the king's troops under where his men were in ambush, who rolled down masses of rock from above, and galled them with pikes and javelins. Eros suddenly retreated to his ships, and standing a little way

out at sea, out of reach of the enemy, he shot upon them with arrows, so that they were almost all killed, and he lost not one man.

When the king heard this, his rage was extreme. He ordered his ships out, manned them, and went on board in person; determined to take ample vengeance on his enemy. Eros, who wished nothing so much as to come face to face with the king, and fight it out, began immediately to build more vessels for the use of those who daily flocked to him. And though his number was not half that of the king's, he fought with him, conquered him, and took him prisoner with his own hand.

That night he lodged among the rocks, with the prisoners he had taken; and in the morning rode into the forest, took the urn that contained the ashes of Lyches, and putting it into the king's hands, made him carry it to the gates of the city. There, unloosing his prisoners, he gave them their liberty, and sent them to the gate to demand admission; which the people, seeing his good intentions towards them, immediately granted. And going to the chamber of the king, he told the people of his lady's last request, and his determination to fulfil it.

So he mingled the ashes of Lyches and Cleone in one urn; and requested a monument of stone

to be built between two pillars, and their stones to be engraved thereon.

He then took his seat at the council, and ordering the king to be brought before him, said, "As I have been the cause of preventing thy further oppression of thy people, and have fought and conquered thee with my own proper hand, it is agreed that I shall decide upon thy fate. Art thou not ashamed for the strokes I received at thy command? Art thou not ashamed, that thou hast laid violent hands upon me, and would have put me to death because I would do the just and delicate request of my departed mistress? And all this through the drunken reeling and staggering of thy power upon one, who, when he is set opposite to thee on earth (as we shall be in equal scales in heaven), is far thy superior in honour, in virtue, and in power? But having taken your place, I will have blood for blood, and blow for blow." Then turning to the council, he said, "For his indignities to me, and his cruelty and selfishness to his people, I command that he be whipped, and his head struck off with an axe. As I came here only to avenge myself, and do what is right, and not to usurp any seat, so, my desire being completed, I leave you freed from the tyrant, with your peace in

your own hands. Requesting only, that you will retain in your affairs such few of my band as are living since the battle, who will do honestly by you."

And the elders gave him a grant of money, and requested him to stay amongst them; but he had determined on voyaging to Germany, and left Cyprus forthwith.





THE WIDOW OF LYONS.

IN the time of Henry the Fourth of France, there lived at Lyons a poor widow, a woman of drudging honesty, having an only son, who could never learn of her any thing but the ways of industry. His disposition, however, was that of insensibility. He was viciously idle. Though her good name had procured for him a comfortable mode of obtaining a livelihood, yet he could not keep his fingers from other men's parcels; and he was continually in jeopardy about some dishonest practice or other. This, so contrary to the opposite nature of his mother, gave her great pain. Her affection, however, was so great, that in all his difficulties she never abandoned him; though her good name among her neighbours became soiled, and much shame by reflection fell upon her.

It happened, that he was taken in some daring and unlawful attempt, and being brought before the judges, they sentenced him to be severely whipped, and banished for five years. The stripes he bore with callous hard-heartedness : and when that part of the sentence had passed upon him, and his mother made her way through the crowd of spectators, and came and threw a cloak over him, and put balsam into his wounds, he was insensible to her kindness and her tears, and jested away the time with the bad companions who came about him ; treating the sentence of the judges with indecent ridicule. His mother, whose love to him was equal to his callousness of heart, did not forsake him, but wanted a weeping image at his side through the city, and across the water to the boundary prescribed. And exhorting him to take some thought for himself, she left him, full of agony , promising, if Heaven would spare her life, to do all in his absence that might make his home more comfortable to him, and to have some easy means prepared against the expiration of his term of punishment, by which he might live honestly. Then recommending him, wreck as he was, to the mercy of God, she hugged him to her heart ; leaving him deaf to her voice, and as insensible as stone. Before she had gone

far, the echo of his laugh struck like madness on her ear.

When his term of punishment was expired, he came back, and she received him again to her longing arms; having thought of nothing but him since he had been gone. He was a brute by nature, and could not alter. He droned away what little honey this poor labouring bee had got together; turned night into day; swaggered and rolled from one day into another, abounding in all the deformity of vice. Her heart was wrung, her eyes swollen, her prayers frequent, and her patience unbroken.

In pity let us pass over too narrow a search into the disgusting causes of so severe a sufferance.

When all was gone to rack, and spent, he conceived a design of once more outraging the law; and like a bold villain, had planned a robbery and murder in a wood. He was taken in the attempt, and hanged; and being dead, was spread out in chains upon a gibbet, on the same spot where the murder was attempted. No penitence or prayers could reach him. He hated his mother for her virtue contrasted with his vice, and would not see her; stubbornly loathing all good things, so that he died cursing and raving.

Nothing, however, could abate the affection which nature had planted in the tender maternal bosom of his mother. She saw only him, but not his vices. These hard tugs carried her beyond her sphere of thinking, and she dwelt fondly on fancy; going back to his innocent childhood, when he reposed upon her breast; reviewed his little fascinating ways, and dwelt yearningly upon the memory of his endearing youth. Her love and tenderness was the grave of his vices: there they were hid and forgotten.

In the dead of the night she went into the wood, and with a file and a knife released the body from its dishonourable bier; she carried it to a secret place, and kissing once more his forehead, buried him in the earth, and wept and prayed over him. When the body was missed, some of those officers, who live by detecting the petty infringements of the law, took this woman in the fields (for she had no house to go to), searched her person, and carried her before a justice to answer to the charge. And they said, "Sir, the body of the man whom you caused to be hung in chains, has (contrary to the law) been taken away; and as this woman was his mother, we have searched her, but found no implements upon her, nor any thing, save only

a bible of small worth." The justice, who was a proud and insensible man, casting a frowning glance at her, demanded to know instantly the truth. And she, taking courage to herself, answered him, saying, "Sir, as lying was one great cause that brought my poor son to so bad an end ; whatever consequences be upon me for it, I shall confess openly the truth. 'Though my son was dead, his image still haunted my mind : I could not but glance at the many past years that have gone over my head ; nor could I forget the hopes and fears I have had on his account. I thought he was in too cold and inhuman a place for a child whom I could not help loving ; so I brought him down, and took him in my arms, and buried him ; and God have mercy on his soul." The justice said, "Woman, you have broken the law. Where hast thou disposed him ?" And she, with a resolved soul, answered, "No human threats, no human law shall ever urge me to confess. As I loved him better than myself, I ventured my life to cover him in earth ; as I still love his mere remains better than myself, I will throw down my life to keep him in quiet rest where he is." And the justice, whose arrogance was affronted at beggary and independence, made it a personal quarrel ; and, overlooking the profoundness of her heart,

consigned her to prison till he should pass some sentence upon her.

Now it happened that the king (more familiarly known by the appellation of "Henri Quatre") was in the city of Lyons in disguise (as was often his mode, when he would mix unnoticed among his subjects), and at this time in the court of justice ; and when he heard of this poor woman's afflictions, and her stoutness of heart, his bosom ached for her, and tears escaped him.

He took her out of prison, and maintained her worthily in his household : he fined the justice heavily, disgraced him as a man devoid of all humanity, and drove him from the bench.





THE PRINCE AND THE GENTLEMAN.

ABOUT the decline of the reign of Henry the Fourth, king of England, there was in London a certain young gentleman of a most ancient family, called Henghist, possessing a great spirit and an independent fortune ; though not more rich than a gentleman need to be.

It happened that he fell in love with a young lady of great beauty, the daughter of a farmer ; Emma was the lady's name. She answered the affections of her lover completely, so that they were married, and she became the bride of Henghist, and of happiness.

The prince Harry was then in the full career of his wanton and voluptuous way of life ; and having seen this lady, he desired her, and began

to search for means by which he might get some power over her. His conduct was not so much the effect of vice, as of restlessness and folly ; and had he known the affection subsisting between these two, it is reasonable to suppose (from the sequel) that he would have veiled his passions, and treated their unity of heart with respect. But he gave himself no trouble to consider this, and treating them drily as man and wife, saw no reason why the lady should bar his princely presence.

Henghist by some means became acquainted with his desire, which did not fail to disturb his mind, fearing much that his lady might be dazzled by the greatness of his rival. And he said to himself, "I myself will forward the prince's views (hard as it is) till I see the bent of her inclination ; when, if I find her honest, a world of princes shall not wrest her from my arms ; if not, my end is come ; for I cannot live without this woman."

Calling her to him in the morning, he said, "Madam, I have ordered my horses, and intend to ride to a certain place some miles from the city ; and as I shall like to walk a little after so long a ride, I would wish you to meet me at the grove of firs, two miles from our house, at sunset ; and I request you to come alone, as the

business I go upon will require some secrecy. Knowing the prince was to pass by at that time, and having arranged matters accordingly, he went out. In the evening, when the sun was going down, he went with two servants armed and well mounted into the grove, fearing lest the prince might use some violence ; and being resolved that the whole stake should be set on the virtue of his wife.

It fell out, that the prince rode by at the time Emma was passing, so that he stopped her and told her of his passion ; and coming down from his horse he knelt at her foot, and entreated her to have some compassion on him. Emma, whose heart was full, and not at all tainted by the greatness of his person and offers, dreaded lest her husband should come up at the time, and that some quarrel would happen, whereby the comfort of her family and her husband's happiness would fall under the prince's displeasure, who might choose to ruin them for his revenge. She, though with great timidity and modesty, entreated him fair ; still giving him no hopes to nourish his passion, nor yet enraging it by a loud protestation of virtue. And he seeing the great pain she was in, comforted her, and intreated her to go with him ; but finding this useless, he thought it best to proceed by de-

grees. He requested to see her soon again, which she (to have him gone) partly granted.

Henghist seeing them part thus familiarly, and that the prince laid his lips upon her hand, was mad with jealousy. And immediately the prince had departed he rode up, anxious to learn the truth; and dismounting, he sent his servants home with his horse. When Emma saw him, she flew into his arms, and telling him the whole of what had happened, besought him to cherish her in his bosom, and to take some prudential means to save her, without bringing down ruin on their heads. Henghist kissed her from the fullness of his satisfaction, seeing the singleness of her feeling; and comforted her, saying, "I have so much faith in thee, that I will furnish my wit at all times to secure thy honour and guard thy happiness."

This circumstance, as it were, carried them back the two years that they had been married, and freshened their passion for each other. It made them sensible how necessary they were to each other's happiness; and shook the blossoms of their affection, as the murmuring south startles yielding odours from dewy splendid flowers. They felt that, as long as they looked upon each other in a straight line, they were above the touch of circumstance, and independent of the

fascinations of the surrounding world. They were like faith and gentleness startled by danger.

The prince, finding that he could by no liberal way get to the lady, laid a stratagem to surprise her. Henghist now thought it high time to look about him, and be upon his guard. So taking the habit, and affecting the manners of a desperado and fortune-hunter, he went to a tavern, where the prince rioted away much time with lewd companions, and demanded to see him. He came with a face wrinkled with laughter, and a mouth stained with rhenish, in a most fanciful and unprince-like condition; so that Henghist said to himself, "Is this the man, who to gratify one corner of his fancy would debauch my wife; drive me to madness, and her to wretchedness and despair?" And turning to the prince, he said, "I tender your highness pardon, the matter between us is a short one. I hear you are in love with the wife of one Henghist, but have been baffled in your attempts to secure her. I am a kind of lark-catcher in this way, and have it now in my power to put her into thy hand at a certain time and place. How much is a day's work to finish so elegant a piece of merchandize worth, think ye?" The prince's eyes sparkled, and

he said, full of enthusiasm, "Ask anything in reason, and thou shalt have it. On with thy bonnet: come, let us go about this thing direct." Henghist, however, was more cool upon the subject, and the newness of so nettling a situation troubled his spleen; but governing his feelings, he said, "It is impossible to do this thing immediately. I must be hired before I do my work. I have a plan digested, but not executed. If in three days' space you will meet me in Sherwood forest, under a certain oak, at the set of sun, I will engage to produce this lady and give her to thy hand, provided thou wilt give me a reward sufficient for the parting with such a prize. If I fail, restrain your reward, and execute your vengeance upon me." And the prince said, "I will meet with thee; and upon my honour, as my blood is right royal, I will either reward thee sufficiently, and fully to thy satisfaction, or not receive the lady at thy hands." So they parted.

When the day came, he took the lady with him and went into the forest, leaving her at some distance from the place of meeting; and proceeding on, he saw the prince had many horsemen with him. He therefore made a signal, and carrying him a mile off into the forest, and out of the reach of his companions,

fetched the lady to him, and said, "Lo! sir, I keep my promise. Here is the lady Emma, wife to the Englishman Henghist; I give her to thy hand. Now, sir, keep your promise. Where is my equal reward?" The prince, full of joy, said, "Thou time-keeper, thou true one; name it—roundly." Henghist said, "I cannot." And the prince answered, "I'll be thy accountant, and thou shalt not lose: take thou five hundred pounds. Wilt do?" Henghist shook his head, and said, "No." "Will six?" "No." "Or seven?" "No." "For so rare a jewel, man, we will not split; nor dull its lustre with a mean regard. Take thou a thousand. What—still a glutton?" And full of derision, he ironically added, "Perhaps you would be content with a bond for my next year's receipts, some seven manors, and a few estates tailed with green parks. Belike I had better pawn the crown to thee, when I shall be my dad and sit in the golden chair. Come, sir, no more of this. Make thy demand, and waken not my wrath." Henghist still said, "Sir, indeed I cannot. I will tell thee what it cost me, and leave thee to count what heaps can be enough for this prize. I am a gentleman. And first, by giving up this lady to thy hands, I lose my honour;—count out a sum for that.* Next, sir, I lose the only

thing in all the world that is joyful to my eye, sweet to my lips, ample to my arms, delicious to my senses; to my heart, a hoop that keeps it staunch from breaking; to my soul, a gate that shuts all sorrow out and joy within;—count out a sum for that. In fine, I lose a beautiful, high, honourable, loving, loved wife. Call alchemy to aid; turn Ossa into gold; delay the waves, and cast their lucent green to wedgy diamonds; confound the grossness of the-cited earth; turn all to gorgeousness, that it may vie in all its varied hues with a fiery sun-set; make human creatures gods, and me ten thousand times their king—Oh! it would not pay for a corner of my heart, nor buy a pang out; much less wipe from my brain the memory that she here is my wife.” Then, drawing her to himself, he said, “Now, sir prince, ’tis my turn to begin.” And the prince assuming much dignity, and checking him, said, “Hast thou no respect for my person?” Henghist answered, “God wot I have had much, and have shown it patiently. Hadst thou been any but whom thou art, thy death had long been debtor to my sword. But it is come to this. We meet here, man to man; all precedence, all title, dignity, and privilege are forfeited by you. You have o’erstepped the bounds of modesty, and plucked

my honour by the beard : let that matter rest. I part with this lady and my life at once. It you so dearly love as I do, she being mine, do thus ; pluck out your sword and win her. I am willing, sir, to fight for her, but not to part with her. And as thou must have got some honour, I appeal to that. Let this matter end upon this ground. Thy word is already engaged never to make prize of this lady till thou canst amply satisfy me for the loss of her ; and that will never be. But if you feel inclined to evade this promise, in God's name o'erleap it at once, and let us fight it out ; that I may live with peace and honour, or die." And after a pause, the prince said, "Henghist, put up thy sword, and fear not the recoiling of my passion. Betake thee to thy house, and Heaven have eyes on thee for a true gentleman."

Some time after this the king died. And when the prince was made king (not having forgotten his admiration of Henghist's spirit, and his former affection for his lady) he sent for him privately ; asked pardon of the lady, and bestowed a lordship and manors upon Henghist ; and ever after treated him as a friend.



BEATRICE OF GENOA.

IN ancient times, there dwelt in the city of Genoa a nobleman called Durazzo, a bosom friend of the prince Balbi, and in his confidence. Durazzo and Balbi were both young men, and had been educated and brought up together from earliest infancy, so that the greatest affection was nourished between them.

There lived with the prince Balbi a lady of great beauty, his concubine, called Beatrice, to whom he bore the tenderest love. It so chanced, that this lady fell deeply in love with Durazzo, and endeavoured by all the means in her power to engage his attention; making known her passion by every opportunity, and offering those advantages to which a man of his gallantry could not be blind: it produced, however, nothing but a painful effect upon him;

and the lady's deep settled affection subsided into a silent melancholy. The prince, in great distress, continually questioned Durazzo about Beatrice's sickness of mind; not as suspecting the cause, but to ask his advice and assistance. Durazzo seeing that he, though innocent, was the cause of all this uneasiness, determined to speak to Beatrice; he therefore concealed himself in a pavilion in the garden, into which she was coming; and soon she sat herself down, and began to weep bitterly. Durazzo came to her and took her by the hand, and said, "Madam, I beseech thee to stop those sorrowful tears, and amend your broken spirits; you stain your own beauty; the king's heart is almost broken; and you force me to live in pain." And she said, "That last is something." He answered, "Do not mistake me; I come to speak of reason to you." And she said, "Sir, I am a lover." He continued, "I do not misprize the favour you do me in casting your regards upon me, and though I never could answer the fullness of your affection, I have too much manhood to see a lady weep when I could dry her tears, did not the boundary of honour stand between us. I cannot entertain your passion." And she said, "Think me not too bold if I speak out freely; a little hope doth make me me very eloquent.

If you would glance at any duty due to the prince from me, I answer, that I know it not : I am no longer his mistress than I shall choose to own him for my master : my heart was never his, it was as free as a bird till you had it ; now it is hawked at, it bleeds ; and yet I gave it not to thee, nor can I call it back : these things are fatal. I know no tie to bind me from loving you. If you see it as a crime, and I must die for it, neglect me still ; thy will is then fulfilled : thy passionless return to my poor love doth bury me alive. Why am I to be used thus, because I would leave a prince, where all my whims are laws, to affect a lord ; because I step from off a royal throne into a narrow chamber ? Oh ! for thee I would forfeit royalty, renown, riches, and sovereign sway, ambitious longings, and all that gloss that lines the mantle of his greatness, and add, as another grain, my life. Give me strong reason why thou art my murderer ; or help me, and let me live." Though Durazzo was much pained at her distress, his self-love was not aroused ; nor was the friendship he had ever professed for the prince at all tainted. Taking the lady by the hand, he said to her, "Madam, the reasons that guide me, and keep my passion unalarmed, refer not so much to your love for me, as to the

injustice I should be guilty of in returning it. The prince, your lord, though ever my master, hath cast aside all difference from our youth upwards ; and as I find by reflection, his favours and honours bestowed on me have ever kept pace with, and have been the wholesome return for, such goodness or honesty as has at any time been done by me ; as I cannot praise him with my tongue, I take all silent means (such as this present) to do him service, and to account to my heart, under heaven, for what goodness I can do him in return for his great kindness to me. The prince is an honest man ; and shall I fall off from his side ? I, that am nearest his heart, battle his friendship and turn traitor to him ? Shall I join those many in the world that are bating his peace ? To them he is invulnerable, through superior honesty ; but to an act like this, he would fade as a flower in its freshness, canker-spoiled ere it hath run its little season ; for, lady, he loves you as sweetly as saints love heaven, and hath as great a faith in me. If I could do anything to save or help the loved of Balbi, they could command it without a sigh or tear, through my friendship to him. I cannot do this thing : it would go hard with his life. My friendship to him is greater than my love to you . it can do more to withstand your love

than your love can offer against me ; for I respect mine honour." Beatrice could not answer this appeal ; but not being converted from her desire, she said, "I pray thee listen to me. Let the prince live on in ignorance. I will use some art to increase the appearance of my affection towards him, so that he shall suspect no falling off: thus none of the parties are aggrieved, and my soul will find some rest." And he said, "Thy wit and thine honesty, show equal weakness in this speech ; for thine artfulness would disgust me, and thy purpose to the prince never hold. Thinkest thou that I could share the noble Balbi's smile, embrace him, think with him, join in his laugh, drink healths by the sparkle of each other's eyes ; or carve my meat with him, and not expect that every bit would choke me? Could I see him dwell by the hour with doating eyes upon thy face, while thou art musing upon our guilty acts? No more, no more—Were the prince less mine, or you less his, I could answer thee ; but as it is, I would have thee turn to whence thy worship comes. I have sought thee for fear thou should'st think I despised thee ; and also to tell thee, that to sigh to the winds, to weep into the sea, or groan in a howling night, will no more shake or act upon me, than thou canst

upon fate : therefore, seeing thou hast no hope, be patient, and fall short of despair." And when he would have gone, tears burst from her eyes ; and, full of agony, she threw herself upon his neck, and kissed him, begging for some mercy ; but he shook her off, so that she fell upon the ground. And he went from her : but she got up and came to him, and leaning on his arm, said, "I prythee suffer me to be of thy company only into the house." And looking upon him all the way, she went without uttering a word into the palace.

It is the way with women when their love is slighted, to turn, by a revolution of feeling, to the opposite deadly passion ; and to pursue the once coveted object with savage hatred, through the contempt they conceive offered to their self-love. Was it so with the impassioned Beatrice ? For some time after, she bore herself more cheerful ; which rendered the prince (who doated on her) a little more happy, and induced Durazzo to believe that she had taken his advice, and combated her passion.

Suddenly Durazzo was arrested, convicted of treason, spoiled of his effects, and banished, by a mandate signed by the king's own hand. If a fixed star had fallen at his feet, he could not have been more amazed. He settled as near to

Genoa as he could, in a lonely village ; fancying the air of his native place would sometimes blow freshly upon him and comfort him : and with the little money he had had put into his hand by a stranger as he was dismissed the city, he purchased a cottage and cattle, and lived the lonely life of a shepherd.

Need it be questioned whether Beatrice had done him this good turn ? Who but a woman could have turned the prince's brain, and have blinded him to the former faith and friendship of Durazzo, which had been mutually nourished, even, as he said, from their childhood upwards ? Having thus gained her points as far as she practically could, she cast her eyes to the theory of her actions, in which she proved to be wanting : it was true she had ruined Durazzo, but it was her great love that did it, and not her hate. She had worked upon the prince to banish him, through cunning arts ; she had laid her sickness of mind to him ; she had annihilated the prince's affection for him ; she had kept them from an interview ; she had caused it to be instilled into Durazzo's mind, that certain rich men of the court had wrought his ruin, and that she was labouring with the prince in his behalf ; through her the money had been put into his hands as he left the city gate ; he was observed as to

where he had taken up his abode, and invisible agents were feed to watch over his safety while there, and to see all his comforts supplied ; and all this was to destroy the only opposition to Durazzo's arms, his great friendship to Balbi. for, saith she, " All these injuries cast upon him, the feeling so winterly and aguish a cold where he looked for a cherishing sun, will be like having his heart cast forth of Balbi's bosom, where it has been nourished, for vultures to dip their beaks in it. On the recoiling of his passion, his deep sense of the prince's ingratitude, and soreness at his injuries, will I work."

One day, haluting herself, Beatrice came to the prince, saying, " From the great uneasiness of soul that oppresses me through some hidden cause, I am come to request that your highness will bless me before I go to perform a pilgrimage to the patron saint of your fathers, some leagues from the city." And embracing him she departed.

Taking a bag of gold, she went alone to the cottage of Durazzo, which was built of trees, and stood down in a valley by itself ; and he being out upon the hills with his flock, she lifted the latch of the door, and coming in, cast herself upon his bed of skins to wait for him. When the sun was going down in its brilliancy, she

heard the harbinger, his well-known voice, as he came down through the valley, chanting blithely a ballad he had often sung at the king's table : this, and his happiness of mind, a little surprised her ; but only for a moment, for other feelings were uppermost. When he came into the hut and saw who was standing there, he cast away his crook and embraced her fervently, and cried (as soon as he could for joy), "How is the prince?" Beatrice would have spoken of other matters : when Durazzo said, "I will not hear a word till thou hast answered me : how is the prince, my dear, dear Balbi?" She answered, sinking with surprise, "He is well." Then he, fetching forth some wine and fruits, apologized for such poor entertainment, and was full of anxious inquiry about his friends in the city ; all his converse in the end tending to the prince's welfare and happiness. He thanked her for the kindness she had manifested towards him, and was touched to tears at the generosity of this visit when all else had deserted him ; she ever and anon beginning to talk of the prince's unkindness to him, and he, in pain, avoiding all discussion. At length, trembling, she took his hand, and looking in his face with a sad countenance, said, "I have tried to be at rest but cannot. Seeing how the prince hath

used you, it hath loosened all that little of my affection that remained for him; and seeing how thou art deserted by thy citizens and friends, I hate Genoa, and its pride: may I live with thee?" A tear started into Durazzo's eye, and shaking his head mournfully, he said, "Thou art come upon a fruitless errand: I love the prince, I love my friends, and Genoa where I was nursed, as deeply as ever; more deep in absence and silent retrospection. I am as jealous not to wrong them as ever, and will be more so. That, which is folly in Balbi, is not knavery; he hath lent his ear to lying whisperers. Friends I never had; I built not on them, and I feel not the loss: some of them were good enough, but all were cursed by the world's plague, selfishness. For my enemies, single them out, and with a sword and my revenge, I would take quittance of them, sealed with their blood. For my country (do I love my soul?) it is one more reason why I love the prince, for he deals honourably with it; he always denies himself to comfort that when their interests jar, his straight dissolves to air. I could take a year to praise him, and not end. To be honest with you, madam, on these several reasons I do deny your passion." Despair was now coming upon her, and she was about to break into loud exclama-

tions of grief against him; but he took her gently by the hand, and removing the curls from her forehead kissed her tenderly. And he returned her the gold, and covering her in his cloak, and taking a staff, he led her out to the city.

For some weeks Beatrice bore this repulse with fortitude, seeing that there was no hope, and she gave up all further design, considering herself the fool of fortune. Her despair, however, gave way, her passion renewed in all its violence, and seeing she could not live without Durazzo, and that he was dead to her, she determined at least to become his companion. To this end she disguised herself in a herdsman's dress, and without a single feeling of regret, turned from the palace and the city, and came to where Durazzo lived and offered to serve him and to live with him; he, being in want of a servant, took her into his service, and became her master.

When the prince found that she was gone, he was distraught with the violence of his passion; regret, sorrow, and despair, by turns filled his mind, and his long sickness, caused by the daily proof of her mind being detached from him, at length ended in his death; but not on a peaceful couch: being recovered from a fit of melancholy,

he fell into an opposite excess, and having deluged himself with wine, fell over the terrace of his palace into the area before the garden, and dashed out his brains upon the marble pavement : thus he was found by his attendants, quite dead. It was supposed, that during his distress of mind, he had thought upon Durazzo and his miserable banishment, and that some of his old sympathies had touched him ; for in his will was found a repealment of his banishment, and a grant to reinstate him in his old possessions

Balbi's death had so severe an effect upon Durazzo's mind, that he fell into a violent sickness ; and would have died, but for the watchful anxiety and attention of Beatrice ; who, having lived with him in retirement, was now his companion in the city, and received the benefit of his fortunes ; Durazzo never suspecting who she was, but bearing towards her the tenderest friendship.

Now it so happened, that after a lapse of time Durazzo sanctioned the affections of a rich and beautiful woman towards him, and declared his intentions to marry her. Again the heart of Beatrice was on fire ; this was a matter that touched her near : for she felt, if she disclosed herself, and threw off the man's apparel, Durazzo

would hate her as the murderer of the prince, and drive her from his sight : to live with him wived, she could not : to abandon his company, were to leap into the jaws of misery and despair ; she therefore chose the only alternative. The time of Durazzo's marriage was at hand ; and the night before, when he was to be wedded in the early morning, he came to the chamber of Beatrice, saying, "I prythee sit with me this evening, and let us partake of the social joy that to-morrow is to bring with it for my happiness. I have left the company carousing in the hall for thy private friendship ; for I wot well, as long as the tubs are not dry, nor the dishes empty, they will find no lack of me." And after talking some time, he added, "But my good friend, you are sad ; cast aside your too usual fit of melancholy, and be glad : you do not seem to have your whole heart engaged in this affair." She took his hand, kissed it, and pressed it to her heart ; and with tears in her eyes, said, "You are deceived." And she filled a cup of wine, and, mixing a strong poison in it, drank to his lady's health and long life, draining off the whole. Durazzo thanked her, and was sorry for his rebuke. Beatrice would not let go his hand, but gazed full in his face ; and having kissed him, fell dead at his feet.

When Durazzo discovered the hidden truth, he was in much sorrow and pain for her long passion ; and did all but reflect on himself for his behaviour to her, and for the manner in which he had acquitted himself of the hard character he had to perform.





FRANCISCO OF FLORENCE.



NOBLEMAN named Francisco, in the reign of Ludovico duke of Florence, was in great repute as a statesman ; he was a friend of the duke's, and withal a worthy man. It happened, that the duke died suddenly, and it was conjectured by many that he was poisoned ; but as no marks were visible on his person, the matter did not extend further than surmise. Francisco, who had been sincere with the duke whilst he lived, grieved for him greatly.

Pietro, the duke's brother, ascended the throne, as protector and guardian to the two children of the deceased, who were then infants ; and as Ludovico had died a widower, Francisco determined to attach himself privately to the welfare of his children, and become the guardian of their infancy. He was urged thereto by three reasons ; first, it was the greatest respect he could show

to the memory of Ludovico; and he did not think them too secure in the total power of the protector; secondly, the protector was vain and ambitious, and unfavourable towards him: and thirdly, he had lost his only child, a daughter, who died in earliest infancy, and her mother also.

Hitherto the protector, during the life of the duke, had treated Francisco with outward indifference, but a secret hate; but now that he was on the throne, nothing could be sweeter or more cordial than his manners towards him: "he wore his honour in the newest gloss;" was affable, smiling, and complaisant; indeed, every thing that might be likely to trammel up the sight of the world, and beget short-minded security. For a short time things went on with serenity; when one morning, without having perceived any alteration in the protector's manner, or having had the least altercation with him, Francisco was arrested in his bed, carried before a tribunal of the protector's creatures, convicted of crimes he had never heard of, and sent out of the country that day. A little reflection soon showed him the reason for all this, and he trembled for the children: it was evident that they were to become a sacrifice, and that his removal was the signal for action.

When he considered the subtlety with which the protector had acted, his having gone quite beyond him, though alarmed and upon his guard, he saw that it would take the utmost stretch of ingenuity and courage to overreach him, and save the lives of his victims. but having resolved to do it, he held his life only to that end. He saw, that whatever was fit to be done, it would be wise to do it suddenly; he therefore shut himself up in his chamber, and having pondered over the circumstance, and weighed every point separately, concluded that nothing he could do openly would be of avail to operate against the evil designs of the protector. He therefore, knowing his own weakness and the protector's power, determined to become the instrument of his vengeance: it was a bold step, and the hazard desperate; but the stake was a great one, for which he compelled himself to cast.

He covered himself in a disguise to display his muscular figure, and give the identity of power to his step and motion; he practised his features till he had a look of ferocity at command; he suffered his hair to grow, and notched his beard; having always a pebble in his mouth to fret and alter his voice; he dyed his face with the juice of berries; and his manner was that of a savage. Thus, altered, he went again

into Florence; and on some pretext or other, made his appearance before those persons to whom he was best known in his prosperity, and seeing they did not recognize him, he considered himself safe, and his disguise complete. Now he thought (and with great wisdom and sagacity, born of his affection to the duke's children), that the protector had removed him, that he might the better act his tragedy upon his young charge, and secure the throne to himself absolutely; and believing that he was upon the look-out for a fit person to perform the bloody work, he had thus tutored himself, thinking that no charms were to be discovered in him, but what were compatible with such an office. He lost no time, but engaged in the protector's train, and made his appearance before him. He watched every opportunity to be in his way, and to catch his observation; but there was no need for such a practice long; for the protector followed him with his eye, observed his actions and his manner, and there was a something visible in his look, which seemed to say, "Thou art the man."

At first Francisco doubted whether his plot could have operated so suddenly, and whether it was true that he had gauged the intents of the protector so correctly; fearing lest this

regard of his might arise from suspicious scrutiny : he therefore took the readiest means to prove it on him at once, and to bring him to a conversation. Being out with him the following morning, hunting, he purposely irritated one of his favourite dogs, then took it by the throat and held it up resolutely, whilst he beat in his ribs with the iron handle of his dagger, pretending violent passion. The protector, whose eye had been ever upon him, stifled the satisfaction in his face, and coming to him, said, "Fellow, why hast thou done this? Thou knowest the dog thou hast killed was a noble animal, and a great favourite with me; dost thou think I will let a matter of this nature go unpunished?" Francisco answered, "My lord, I am sorry, but it is my temper. I mean my nature is rather warm; it is for ever bringing me to answer accidents of this kind. But since I have offended your highness, allow me to leave your service unpunished; unless your highness will be good enough to appoint me to some post where the tender feelings of nature are not too much concerned, by which I can be of service, and atone for my fault."

This was at once setting the question at rest; for if this plan might not answer, he was anxious to get at liberty to try some other; and if he

had understood the protector rightly, now was the time for him to speak, or never.

After musing some time, the protector, slanting his eyes upon his face with a cruelly subtle and portentous look, said, "I have thought upon thy request: after the evening bell has sounded, do thou strike upon the palace gate that leads into the garden." At the appointed time, Francisco made his appearance at the gate; the protector himself opened it, and carried him to his chamber, where a pile of gold lay upon the table, and a bag also full to the brim: he then said to him, "Dost thou know how long I have been thy secretary?" "I do not understand your highness." "Hold out thy hand: clutch thou this bag of gold, 'tis yours." "How have I earned this? Your highness trifles with me." "Thy look has earned it; and this thou seest here besides, is due to thee when thou hast done a deed but equal to thy looks. Thou didst ask for some office that had no humanity about it: canst thou shed blood? Aye, thy hand upon thy dagger: try to doubt." "Why, your highness—" "Nay, have no shame with me; for I, who would have this thing done, blush not. I hate those I would execute upon. They keep the sun off: they are thorns to my foot: my eye aches at

them : my thought loathes them : they taint the air I breathe. How shall this be done ? What device hast thou ? Two children—nothing ; why a sack would end their squeaking.” “ Aye, but household murders are dangerous things ; they tell tales ; they speak out after long being dumb : fifty years is not the date of their bond : they haunt the place, and then men dream of it. I am not safe in it. The forest, now, what think ye of the forest ? Send them to sleep ; give them to me in a sheet, and let me ride into the forest with them. They are soon sped. Tell the old uncle’s story ; say they were stolen. If any shake their heads, chop them off for palsied fools.” “ ’Tis a great hazard ; but if I would be duke it must be done , the sooner the better. Here, take thy hire : fail not to be at this spot at one, well armed and mounted and look ye, be secret.” “ My interest lies that way, no other.”

When he had got into the street, he rejoiced aloud : glorifying the gods that every thing had fallen out to his desire, and at once so mercifully. When he made his appearance at the gates, and received the children into his arms, his feelings would have betrayed him, but for the night and his disguise. What a group was here formed ! The protector in his robe of state,

steeped in sweet scents ; having just escaped from a banquet (where he had been throned), which the distant hum of minstrelsy testified to the silent ear of night . a man, in whose command the happiness of thousands lived ; who held so large a stake of human power over his fellow men ; having in trust for heaven two innocent children, near to his blood ; and he irreverently placed, unbonnetted, handing the smiling babes in an innocent sleep, wound in his purple robe, to the cold bosom of an armed ruffian ! It would seem that the silence of night, which is to evil minds most awful, most rebukeful ; the angelic innocence of his victims ; the dark figure of his companion in this darker deed blending with the night, his hollow voice, his hard-heartedness, and the horrid imagination of his presence (not knowing him to be the guardian angel he was), would have overcome his ambition, his thirst for the glitter of a throne, the shout of voices, and all ducal pomp , would have stifled the hatred of his heart a little, and sent him weeping back ; but he was true bred, and could do anything to gain his ends.

Francisco made the signal and the gate was slowly opened ; a pause ensued, when a recognition took place ; they fumbled for each other in the dark ; and when they met, the protector

started, but Francisco was eager for his charge : a scanty dialogue took place in a hurried manner. The sense of the presence of the night startled the protector's state of being. "Where?" said he in a low tone. "Here." "Ride far enough, ride till it is almost morning : be sudden and secure : they cannot wake, they have drank drowsy minerals." "Fear not. Stop, let me mount. Give them up to me now, on this side." "Have no pity." "No." "Relent not." "No." "Remember thy reward, and my favour." "Aye, aye, I do." "Thou art my good fellow Dost thou hear? Get thee into a wood before the light breaks in the east. Do not look upon them ; a tear of pity melts a dagger of steel. I'll make thee great." "Tut, tut, mine's true : wer't in the blazing noon I'd toss them in the air, and catch them on its blade Go to : they are dead and buried. Go back, and laugh, talk to the women, drink deep." "Ha ! sayest thou?" "Good night." "Good night."

The protector went back into his hall, and carried himself as one intoxicated with sudden delight ; as a prisoner who had at length slipped his chains.

Now Francisco had a sister, a lady of great beauty and fortune, living some miles out of

Florence ; and to her he repaired without disclosing himself or his secret: he left the children, having gained her protection for them, and went back into Florence forthwith. It happened, that the neighbouring states were at war, and that a number of Britons were engaged with the successful party, who, in a skirmish in the night, carried off this lady and one of the children, as well as the household ; the other being in a further part of the house, escaped the general captivity. The Britons, judging from the nature of her establishment that she was rich, set a price upon her liberty ; but released her attendants. The war ending suddenly, she was not prepared with their demand, and having no knowledge of where her brother had bestowed himself, could not apply for his assistance ; so she was carried, with the female infant, into England.

Francisco, returning to the palace with the assurance of the children's death, thought it prudent to leave the court of the protector, lest he should be murdered for greater secrecy, and receiving his reward, which was very great, he laid up his disguise, and went again to his sister's house. Nothing could equal his sorrow on finding what had happened ; and gathering the wreck of her fortunes together, he placed

the infant prince in the care of a keeper of a vineyard ; a man much beloved, and of an amiable mind. His thoughts now turned towards Britain ; and he determined to journey thither after his sister. Full of hope, he left Florence, and travelled to all the places where he thought it likely to hear of her ; but finding his search fruitless, he determined to return, being very anxious on account of the young prince : but it so fell out, that the ship in which he was embarked was taken by pirates, and he with the rest of the crew were carried into Naples : it seemed that he never was to accomplish his charitable ends.

Now his sister, who was taken into Britain, was privately sold to a nobleman, who seeing her beauty and modesty, fell in love with her and married her ; pitying her misfortune, and making her mistress of himself and all that was his. For a few years they lived happily together, but her husband, being an officer of the king's, was called upon to summon his vassals and attend him to the field : she, as a lover, grieved herself ill ; and was charitable enough to hate the call of blood and glory, that thus violated the sanctuary of peace and concord ; for her lord's kindness to her had begot the tenderest affection in her heart for him. The war ended,

and she heard that her husband was left dead upon the field. As a stranger, she was deprived of the benefit of his estates, and by petition only she was granted gold enough to convey her and the young princess into Florence. She not knowing who this child was, but loving her for her amiable and gentle disposition, adopted her as her daughter. With an aching heart she came to her paternal home, but found it possessed by strangers; and to complete her grief, learned that all her fortune had been rendered into the hands of her brother, who was gone no one knew whither. Full of distress, and in poverty, she placed her affectionate companion with the family of a herdsman out upon the hills, who lived honestly by feeding cattle for their milk, which they sold into Florence; retiring herself into a convent hard by. Thus three years passed; during which time this young girl was employed in the fields, in milking the cattle; and at the daily rising and going down of the sun, carrying a pitcher of milk to a certain rich family in Florence.

Fortune, that ever meddleth in these things, would fain have it fall out, that the young prince, who dwelt near the place at the vineyard, should meet with her; and she being struck with his natural grace and elegance, no less than he was

with hers, and both of them having abundantly the good gifts of nature (being children of high and gracious blood), and their sweet simplicity not at all tainted by the poorness of their companions, looked upon each other with favourable eyes; and after some looks and words she gave him of her milk, and they parted. The next day, full of new and delightful feelings, coming over the same meadow where she had before met the prince, he appeared before her, and gently took her hand. again they met and parted, and again; and they were full of youthful enthusiasm and affection. The young lady having told her foster-mother of what had happened, she took occasion to see her lover; and observing the equal nobleness of both of them, approved it: thus their time passed, and they were soon to be married.

Francisco, after having been sold among the Moors, and made the sport of chance, was at length to receive the reward of his great patience and honesty: being sent to work on board a vessel as a slave, they were captured by another vessel, bound from Britain to Italy. He was treated with all kindness, and brought to his own country: from his noble manners, which had not forsaken him, he became a great friend with a British gentleman, who was coming to the

court of Florence; who furnished him with money and clothes, and was jealous of his company. On his once more reaching his native place, his first care was to see for the young prince; and when he looked upon him, and conversed with him, he did not regret that he had missed the education of a court; he was a youthful pattern fit to put to any honourable service: it was enough for Francisco to see that he was like the deceased king his father. Francisco thought often upon what way to get him acknowledged, but he had not yet learned how to overcome the difficulty, when news was spread that the protector (who had since been created duke) was at the point of death. Francisco saw that something was to be done, and speedily; so taking his disguise (which he had carefully preserved) and dressing himself as when he had received the children of the protector, he cast a mantle over all, and went to the palace, desiring to see the duke; and when by arts and bribes he had gained his chamber, where he lay sick in bed, he caused it to be cleared of his attendants, and throwing off the mantle, at once struck him with surprise and terror: at length recovering, the duke said, "What good angel hath sent thee hither in so great a need? My soul hath some hopes that my bro-

ther's children are not dead I prithee speak. The nightly, hourly horror with which I have worn this crown, stuck on with blood, hath made me ever wretched ; and now I am dying, nothing but yawning fire and horrid fiends dance in fantastic vision before my eyes. I would not die thus miserable for a million kingdoms. Didst thou murder them?" And Francisco (casting off his disguise) said, "Will you acknowledge either of them if produced?" He answered, "O Heavens! with what joy." "Then by mid-day to-morrow thou shalt see the prince." And leaving him, he went to the vineyard where the prince was ; and his lady was sitting in an arbour of flowers with him. Francisco would have spoken with him privately, but he would not, saying, "What thou hast to communicate, say before this lady ; as I love her equal to a sister, I have no secrets from her." Francisco, not caring much for the matter, told the whole fortune of their lives, and what had befallen them, saying moreover, "To-morrow thou art to go with me to the palace, to be acknowledged the son of the late duke Ludovico, and set upon the throne of Florence. And the prince looked upon his lady, and she was weeping ; and he said, "Before I thank you, my most kind father, for my life,

before I thank the gods for their wise distribution of these things for our good, before I grieve for my pretty sister's loss, or even my father's death, let me kiss off the tears from this sweet lady's eyes, and swear, that whatever fortune high or low attend me, shall be also hers. I shall glory in a throne if she can sit beside me; if not, I'll keep a vineyard." And having consoled her, and shown his gratitude to Francisco (ever calling him his kind father), and talked more on the subject, they retired to be prepared. The duke had made proclamation, so that all Florence assembled, and he caused himself to be brought in his bed out into the fields among the people, surrounded by the nobles of Florence; and there he acknowledged his treachery to his brother's children, as well as to Francisco, and asked their forgiveness. The young prince was produced, and the people shouted: for he, being of a noble presence, and habited in rare apparel like a prince, satisfied the ambition of the youth of Florence; and being the image of his deceased father (who was not forgotten), rejoiced the aged, and all who remembered him.

Now the prince would have brought his lady with him, to share his great fortune; but she would not come, without her benefactress and friend from the convent being there to rejoice

with her ; in the midst of this, they came up to the prince ; but the lady turned suddenly from the young couple, and fell into the arms of a gentleman who stood looking on her ; crying, " My husband ! " ~~And~~ Francisco perceived it was his friend ~~the~~ Briton, who had come in the ship to Florence, and from whom he had heard somewhat of his errand to seek for a lady his wife ; and he stepped up to him, at once to congratulate him, and assist the lady, who was recovering from the effects of sudden joy. When she embraced him, and hugged him to her bosom, and he found it was his sister, the hearts of all present were touched, and they shouted with joy ; and all forgot their cares, and partook of this good fortune as if they had been of the family. The duke and Francisco at once demanded of the lady what had become of the infant, after her capture by the soldiers ; she told the story briefly, and pointed to her whose hand the prince held, who was trembling from head to foot, and muttering the word " brother." The prince ordered her to tell the story again ; and being certain his sister was his lover, in the midst of all this fortune he cursed his fate, and his joy was at once reversed into the severest misery ; so sad was he, and so sorrowful about the lady, that the tumultuous

joy was quelled, and all the people were departing silently and in tears ; when a woman belonging to the king's court stepped forward, saying, " Hold ! what wilt thou do for me if I should unthread this matter, and help thee in this exigency ? " And the prince said, incredulously, " Any thing, if thou wilt undo that which all the world cannot. " And the woman answered, " Shall I have free pardon for myself and those who have wronged the king thy father ? " And the prince said, " Go on, thou shalt. " Then calling two others from the king's household, she said, " Since Heaven will have this matter brought to light, confess ye fearlessly the truth, though we appear as guilty as we are. "

It was an undoubted matter, that they had been the nurses to the former king's children ; and when quite infants, while they were in bed, the female, through their neglect, was smothered in the clothes ; not daring for their lives to confess the truth, they consulted together, and having noticed a child of the same age belonging to a nobleman about the court, to be like the king's, one of them, whose husband was a leech, procured and administered to it a draught that benumbed all the vital powers, and covered it in the appearance of death, and when buried, they opened the tomb, and took out the child

that slept, and put in that which was dead ; and presenting it to the king they escaped detection." The prince took his lady to his arms, who cried out, " Who is my father ? " The three women at once answered, " Francisco " And he said, " If thou art my child (which the gods grant !) thou hast a rose impressed on thy shoulder He slipped aside her clothes, and the truth appeared ; and it being the time for those flowers, it was in freshest bloom.

Thus was Francisco's honesty rewarded • and the people shouted and prepared for rejoicings , and though the duke died that minute, the joy was too great to mourn for him





PROCLES;

OR, HONESTY AND KNAVERY.



IN the most prosperous time of the kingdom of Sparta, it happened, that a king of wilful rule, and of dissolute and luxurious manners, ascended the throne.

Men of this tone and habit of mind, be a government ever so wholesome, will always find creatures who are enough devoted to venality and selfishness to discompose all modest and civil order, and to subvert every good that is opposed to their bad. Those whom they cannot corrupt with the weighty influence of gold and false honour, may go out of date and break their hearts; or watch vigorously in hope for the hour of emancipation and vengeance, which must arrive. Whether it is for want of

the love of honesty, or from fear, or inanity, the mass never move when they know what is honest to be done, until they feel sorely through their self-love the oppression of their rulers ; and that they are suffering under what is not right and just.

In this condition was Sparta, when one was found full of the enthusiastic love of honour, of abstract truth, of moral justice (and therefore of humanity and of his species), to place at the head of an oppressed and groaning body, which was bestirring itself with fervid violence : as a giant emerging from a cloudy, hydra-headed dream into sober certainty, animal power, and hatred (not fear) of the painful oppression, which is horrid no longer.

There was a Spartan gentleman, called Procles (not a gentleman of the city of Sparta), but of honour, integrity, and greatness ; and it will perhaps seem that he was the only one of that kingdom, though she was never so thronged with titles. His heart groaned at the altered state of things : he could see spleen and forebodings in the countenances of men as he walked about the city ; pain and sufferance made inroads upon the public comfort that had till of late existed : the very blades of grass in the field looked yellow to his eye ; he felt the

air thick and unwholesome ; his bosom laboured with its fraught of spleen, and his eye grew wild and untameable with passion. The consequence of this state of things was deadly hatred of such unjust proceedings, and of the authors of them. Discontent spoke out aloud, but received neither attention nor satisfaction. Hands took the place of tongues ; and though the iron grasp of tyranny was strong, liberty struggled and broke from it, and turned fatally to live like itself, or die.

A confederacy was formed of a spirited party, and Procles was called to head them. A desperate battle was fought, the king slain, his party routed, his retainers killed, and the whole constitution reversed.

To overturn a bad constitution is one thing, to set up a good one, another : for one man to erect the standard of honour, and to rebuke and slay another under it, for a vice which he is afterwards guilty of himself, is the trick of two demons, with all their riotous malice, but without their wit.

The government was invested in the hands of this assembly, in which Procles refused any superior place or distinction. For some time matters went on well, and bore the appearance of improvement. •Procles, however, who as

yet had received nothing but honour and merited esteem from his co-adjutants, became by degrees the object of their secret hate : the mystery was, he was too honest for them. When they were mindful of their own aggrandizement and personal consideration, he would set his face against them, and use such arguments, as he well might, which convicted them of the fault, and covered them with shame. He pinched and restrained them for the public good ; got them voted into offices where no more than a sufficient income for a gentlemanly maintenance was necessary : and, in fine, consulted his own and their desires, emoluments, and superfluities last of all. They, however, had tasted power and could not wait : they met in the night, when Procles was not present, and passed decrees, which were irrevocable, tending to their personal advancement and consequence ; and at length, treating his administration as cynical and unjust, voted him out of the assembly, and drove him to the common level of society.

He had long mistrusted them, but did not think that they would prove so bold, impudent, and at once so ungrateful. He now turned cynic indeed ; and having been treated by his supposed friends worse than by his enemies

(who could not break faith with him) he uttered curses on all mankind.

The senate thinking they had better not throw him on the mercy of the public, and thereby excite a dangerous compassion, sent a messenger to him with a bag of gold ; judging of the fulness of his heart by the emptiness of their own. The messenger delivered it, saying, "The senate are now sitting, and have decreed this to you, lest you should think yourself hardly used in not having had any benefit for the services you suppose yourself to have rendered the country." Procles, full of wrathful disdain at this last insult, turned away from the messenger, and went into the senate ; and drawing his mantle from his face, he began fiercely to condemn them, saying, "What is it ye do, ye eye-capt hawks, that fly at your game thus hooded? What is it ye have done already? Patriots! Slaves, I'll tell you. We found a pestilence here in our country, and swore an oath, that for the general good, and out of affection for our fellow-citizens, we would cure it: there was but one way, to let blood ; that we did: we entered the diseased place, risked our lives, and came off whole: we take the credit and honour to ourselves. But what is to be thought of us, when we are found but seven

days afterwards scattering the same unwholesome pestilence, to damn the people twice? It is your selfishness. ye knock down power, to be the slaves of power : the fire that warms, consumes you ; your eyes are 'on the ladder whilst you climb ; you turn, and keep the poise ; once up, you think alone upon yourselves, and how to feast your senses." And one of them said, "Some of us must be greater than the rest. is there to be no difference between him who leads, and the meanest follower?" "Yes, sir, he should have more humanity ; and being first, place himself last. Govern yourselves with abstinence and sweet discretion ; let your hearts and pulses beat as well for the good of others as yourselves ; get beloved for good examples set, and not envied and feared through monopoly of power. Oh ! 'tis wonderful what the example of those few, who lead the many, will do. You are as the ruling sun—ah ! yet he touches all with golden gladness, so might you : such as you can always create evil to justify evil ; for to be out of the vanities of your sun-light is to be in the dull, dull shade ; and the shady side of the world it is that tries the tough sides of honesty. Ere such a light gleam for my worship, I crave, ye gods, utter darkness." "We do for the best : are we to have no honours for our

reward?" "Earn them first. You, sir, have three titles, and seven wide estates. I'll tell a secret smugly in that knavish ear: last night, four human beings, limbed, souled, and minded like ourselves, bearing in their faces the stamp of humanity, the supreme impress, dropped down dead in the public streets of the city, for want. Where were you then, my lord? Drunk, or asleep, or lewd? You do for the best!" They being afraid to meet the truth, were perplexed to hear it, and broke up the assembly; and as they retreated, Procles said to them, "Remember, you discard not me; I discard you. The gods take my country to their hands; and curses light on you! For this your greatest insult, and your last, take it again: off, away!" And he threw the gold at them, scattering it in their faces.

He turned his back upon the city, and in great wrath stripped off his clothes, and with curses scattered them about the place. He then went sullenly into a wood, and made himself a cave, and a dress of skins, feeding his spleen with hatred to all mankind. When, however, grief for the degeneracy of his countrymen, and sorrow for the failure of his long-cherished plans of liberty took the place of hatred and scorn in his mind, he began to

consider what could yet be done to effect some change : he foresaw that those who now headed the government could never agree, whilst one was above the other ; and that the people, feeling no great love to them, would be ready to support any new measures, seeing that all their great promises had failed in the issue, and that they could come into no worse condition. He disguised himself, and went frequently into the city, that he might be able to catch any advantage at the proper time when it should offer : he foresaw that things must come to a second crisis, and that another bloody catastrophe, must be performed ; and thus much came to pass. The senate felt they had been going the wrong way : the country was burthened to madness, and they had no means to relieve it : they had thought only for the present, the future was left to shift for itself. At last they quarrelled amongst themselves, and raised separate armies : thus they did partly to be rid of the perplexity of their affairs, and the danger attending them ; and being actuated by the yet lingering desire of becoming, by the expulsion of their opponents, more absolutely the miserable masters of a miserable kingdom. Thus all was trusted to fortune ; all they thought about, at the time, was the shedding each other's blood.

The principal leaders of one of the parties being desirous to get the best counsel, and being withal as great fools as knaves, remembering with what wisdom Procles had carried them through their difficulties against the king, cast their eyes that way ; and the leaders and officers gathered together and went to him, carrying with them trophies of gold and silver, and bribes (things most precious in their own eyes) : and they came to his cave, where they found him sitting on the ground by a fire, roasting some roots. He took no notice of them, but went on eating. And the chief said to him, " We have taken up arms to quell the overswelling power of some factious brothers in the state ; and reflecting upon the miserable condition to which thou art reduced, we have come to thee in person, with a purple robe of office, and rich gifts, as bespeaking our good will towards thee ; and we offer thee that command, out of compunction for our former neglect, that shall enable thee to act with vengeance upon our common enemies." Still he took no notice of them, but went on eating as if they had not been there : and yet a faint smile (as of contempt) was upon his lip. When the soldier had done speaking, the other continued, saying, " Can thy short banishment have made

thee so insensible ? Dost thou not know that I come to offer thee freedom ? ” Procles having finished his meal, and cleared the hearth, said to him deliberately, wiping his beard, “ Do I not house with the wolf, and not in the city ? Would’st thou give me that which I have, and you have not ? Go to, you are a fool, and know not the virtuous meaning of thine own offer. Away, you poison-wreathed webs, I am too large a fly for your compassing. I love the heavens, and open air ; and am not to be caught in your cornered lairs.” They did but half understand him, and thought his reason was tainted ; therefore applying more art, they still pressed their suit. And being disgusted past a reasonable step, he began to tell them the truth ; casting such names upon them as they deserved, and showing his hatred to them ; twitting them with their vanity, and their carelessness to shed human blood, and cast away human comfort ; but seeing they were chafed with wrath, and were likely to murder him, he stopped, and excused himself, saying, his wits were disordered by the rawness of the elements, and the wildness of his abode. And he becoming sportive and fantastic, they forgot their anger, and made a jest of him, and laughed at him, and at length left him as one unfit for their purposes ;

whilst he muttered some sound oaths after them.

What he had foreseen, had now actually come to pass ; and from this visit he took his cue how to act. His first object was to endeavour to save the deluge of blood that must follow a battle between the parties . for he well knew, that selfish men cling to the skirts of power till the last ; as one who is drowning does to the fringes of a tender and impotent willow, or even to the sappy weeds upon a bank.

A circumstance, however, happened that put him upon his long-tried courage, and forced him to act a brave and desperate part : but it was enough for him to hear even the music of freedom and liberty at a distance, as it were, singing in the wind : a little hope made him very confident ; the stuff, despair, his bosom did not know.

The rambling Romans, to whom war was exercise, hearing of the disjointed state of the Spartan government, dispatched an army thither to capture and subdue them, and it presently arrived. This was an unexpected surprise to these sagacious rebels ; and had a tiger leaped amongst them whilst they were in a cool debate, it could not have scared them more than did this accident. Some of the leaders fled nobly

to the Romans ; others came over to consult those who were their deadly enemies but an hour before, about their mutual safety : as smoke is dispersed by the wind, so were they by this circumstance. In the midst of all, Procles appeared before them, armed like a general ; and having harangued them openly, and called up their drooping courage, joined the two armies into one, and took the command. At which, his brave speeches, and his sympathy for the people's sufferings, led all to rejoice. He well knew that no height was to be safely climbed unless the ladder was firm ; and having had a foretaste of the honesty of his brother leaders, he ordered them to be arrested and put under guard ; then taking with him a list of the most respected men living in Sparta, he called them before him, and according as he looked their faces chose his council from among them : they instantly sat with him in judgment upon the rebel leaders of both factions, and condemned them to be whipped, and their heads struck off that night. He appointed his council as new leaders, and arranging his order of battle, went out confidently to meet the besieging Romans.

Now, having overcome all domestic difficulties, he was resolved not to be conquered by a foreign enemy : having surveyed their strength,

he called together a division of the bravest of his soldiers, who fought with swords, and putting a valiant captain over them, placed them behind a hill out of sight ; and drawing up his army before this hill he waited for the enemy. The attack was desperate, and the repulse vigorous ; but the Romans were likely to be too strong for them. Suddenly, when the Romans charged the second time, the Spartans made a resolute resistance ; but in the midst of all this violence Procles gave a signal, and they gave way, forming into wings on either side ; and the Romans, failing in their opposition, came up fairly to the foot of the hill. At this moment those who were fresh discovered themselves, and came down upon them with all possible violence ; whilst those who flanked them took ready advantage of the disorder : in fine, the Romans were defeated, and the Spartans were victorious. Procles, however, took no advantage of his conquest ; and loving the peace of his country better than the honour and glory of their being successful cut-throats, he behaved in such a way to the vanquished as not to provoke any further hostilities. He entertained them, and feasted them, giving them their liberty without ransom, and sent them away grateful.

It happened, that some time after, the captain

of these Romans became consul ; and hearing that the Spartans were oppressed by a powerful enemy, he was mindful of their gallantry to him, and forthwith sent them such succour as they needed to protect them.

Procles saw no better way to govern the people than that which he had before adopted ; and having faith in his ministers, they doing their duty at once wisely and feelingly to the people, the pulse of happiness was restored, and the time of smiles came round once more.

The people would have forced Procles to accept the crown, but he would not till ten years had expired, that he might first deserve it.





THE MAID OF PROVENCE,

OR, LOVE AND HEROISM.

Kiss no more the vintages
Thou hot-lipp'd sun ;
Flow no more the merry wine
From the dark tun.

Above my bed hang dull nightshade,
And o'er my brows the willow ;
With maiden flowers from dewy bowers
Cover my last pillow.

Away, away to the green sward,
My young heart breaks ;
Break the earth and lay me deep,
Love my breath takes.

Angels pity, and hear this ditty
Breath'd from a poor girl's lips ;
O'er her lover ever hover,
Scattering earthly bliss.

Come, thou iron-crowned Death,
Into my stretched arms,
Bridegroom to my maiden breast ;
End my sad alarms.

Lead on, lead on, thou love of bone,
Over the heath wild ;
And 'neath the grass, secure fast
Thy melancholy child.



WHEN the young girl of Provence had finished this song, as she was sitting shaded from the sun, in the midst of a vineyard, she crossed her arms upon her breast, and drooping down her beautiful head, wept bitterly.

Her name was Blanche, the daughter of the keeper of the vineyards to the duke of Provence. but of a great spirit, and a most delicate nature. The depth of her present woe thus arose :—

The eldest son of the duke, being very free and liberal of his person, and keeping no state, was in the habit of passing sometimes through the remote and unfrequented parts of the city and suburbs for his solitary amusement. It happened, that he had once taken his way through the vineyard, and came riding past while Blanche was training the vines ; and he being of a noble countenance, and most gallantly

habited at the time, Blanche's heart grew warm towards him, and she fell deeply in love with him. Though she had never seen him before, nor after that time, and then only to glance at him, yet so subtle is this god, and such a master is he, that the poor girl, though of tender years, was ill ever after; and thus she used to ease her melancholy heart, by singing in the shade, and weeping out cold comfort from her over-charged breast.

The duke of Provence was well stricken in years, and had three sons; the youngest of whom, named Sebastian, had been brought up at the court of Burgundy, and was now about to return to his father's dukedom. The eldest was called Claude, and the second, Theodose.

Claude was of a most noble nature, like his face and figure. Theodose, his brother, was of a thin face and pale aspect; his eyelid with constraint, half veiling his eye, and pursing sharply at the corners, indicated the depths of cunning, cruelty, and subultry; his forehead was square and braced, denoting firmness and strength of mind; and in the corners of his mouth there was ever ready a sneer of contempt; "there was a laughing devil in his smile," and merciless cruelty. His thoughts were deeds without a tongue. He was a close one, and

watched the key to his own bosom ; but withal a great listener. No one knew him, for his hypocrisy was consummate. "Restless ambition" was the sun that shone upon this dial, and told the hours, nay, the moments, "big as years," that passed without his being duke. His brother was in the way, and he had long been consulting with himself how best to be rid of him.

All men who are domestic savages, for some desired ends, will go the shortest way ; but, from the very shadow of conscientious fear, will shed no more blood than they can help ; so that, though not quite cannibals, their genius turns them into fine villains. Theodose felt disinclined to murder his brother, when he could proudly depend on other men's credulity to do it for him.

He began by shadowy degrees to weaken his father's love for him, and went on to hint at suspicions of a fatal nature ; and being in the confidence of both, could ratify outwardly, by working Claude into all the situations necessary. He caused rumours to reach the duke's ears in divers fearful ways ; and so ably was this sample of his treachery worked, that, as his brother was dismissed from the duke's heart, he himself took all the affection, even to dotage.

At length the duke feared for his life ; his

blood became affected and disordered by the pernicious juice of roots and weeds which Theodose had mixed into his food. At the instigation of Theodose, Claude was one morning seized by the guards of the duke, and conducted before him; where sorrow, indignation, and tears pleaded eloquently to the heart, and testified his innocence. The duke was moved, and became thoughtful. The devil Theodose would, if he could, have feared; but he was ready with his plot. Going up to his brother he embraced him, rejoiced at the conviction in the minds of all present of his innocence, and called with a loud voice all the duke's court, and the nobles from the council-room, to come with congratulations to his brother, so that the hall was thronged.

While embracing Claude, he had slipped into his garments a most potent mineral poison, closely packed, and cunningly inscribed "Dooms-day dust for the duke's health;" and with it a forged letter, in imitation of the hand-writing of Claude, yet unfinished and undirected, but treating of the duke's decease in a jocular tone, of some of his nobles, of divisions in the dukedom, and promising rewards and favours. Theodose was about to lead them to a search. The duke, whose heart was strong, but his mind weak, still paused and doubted; and, as though

villany could not be too lucky, ordered Claude to be searched. When this thing appeared, all were full of horror and dismay. In vain Claude pleaded his innocence, and despised the accusation : he was hurried away, and cast into a dungeon.

The news was soon spread abroad, and when poor Blanche heard it, it overcame her like a cloud, but at length rousing from her forlorn and desolate state, she fell into deep thinking, and arising from her bed, to which sickness at heart had long confined her, she attired herself, and departed. Then drawing of the choicest wine in two pitchers, and putting some cakes in a linen bag, she went to the gates of the prison where the guards were. to one of whom she was known ; and setting these things before them, made merry with them, and loosed the pipe from her neck, and played such merry tunes, as, with wine, most affect the spirits, and bring on lightness of heart.

When they were in full glee, she said boldly, " I have a request to make among you now. You have a prisoner here, the king's son, who is doomed to death ; and as I have a feeling for his soul, in consideration of his crime, I wish that you would suffer a certain priest, whom I will send to you, to converse with him

but for some minutes ; for you all wot how much it is for a man to die with a clogged soul. What say you ?—You will grant this request : it is but little.” They consulted together, and being full of her kindness, and seeing no danger, they consented.

And Blanche took her departure, leaving them carousing under a buttress of the battlements. As evening was come on, she hastened, lest the guard should be changed, then clothing herself in man’s apparel, and putting a cowl and the garments of a priest on her, and carrying a cross, she made her appearance at the gate ; and they, being mindful of their promise, admitted her, thinking her a priest.

When she came into the prison, Claude was in a deep sleep, and smiling like a child. So she went and sat at his feet and wept, saying to herself, “This man is not guilty.” Presently she arose, and taking to herself great courage, awoke him, when he asking of her business, she said to him, “Be it known to thee, O Claude ! thy life or death is in my hands. If thou art guilty, say it ; yet I will set thee free : if thou art innocent, avow it, and I will set thee free :—but beware the lie.” He said calmly, “Whoe’er thou art, I am innocent.” She replied, “God preserve thee, for I do believe it.” And

taking off her cowl and the monk's cloak, she disguised him carefully in it ; and giving the crucifix, she discoursed with him as to the conduct he should pursue, saying that the guards were blinded with wine, and could not notice him. But when Claude questioned of whom he received his life, Blanche held down her head, and was silent. And he was greatly moved at the circumstance, when Blanche gave him a packet, and desired him not to open it before two years' space, and he should then know ; and at the same time assuring him of her safety, she hurried him to the door. And he asked what he could do in the mean time in return for so great a benefit : she replied, " Nothing ; only lay thy lips to my cheek, and kiss me for good fellowship." He did so, and they wrung each other's hands, and so parted in silence and tears, Claude, from Blanche's disguise, still thinking her to be a man. And Blanche sat down in the straw, with a bosom burning with the glory of her act, and awaiting her present fate as a trifle.

It was now midnight ; and Claude had no sooner escaped than the guards were changed.

Theodose, whose subtilty was as the snake's, and his watchfulness as the cat's, had so worked upon the duke, in his whirlwind of wrath, and the soreness of his heart, as to get from him a

warrant for the present death of Claude. And fearing some lapse of tenderness, or that the people (who loved Claude, and could not get their hearts to believe him guilty) would prevent his death, went in the assumed virulence of passion to execute it. It being very dark, and no moon in the heavens, he went with a torch, and gathered two dozen of archers, and brought them to the plain before the prison ; and when they had dug a pit in the ground, he called the guards, and demanded their prisoner.

Now Blanche's heart did not fail ; but glorying in the greatness of her deed, and blessing her lover, she walked enthusiastically forth. They carried her to the mouth of the pit, bound her hands, and tied to them a torch. Still her heart did not fail her ; and the archers being drawn up in a crescent, they levelled at the torch, and killed her twenty times.

Theodose said nothing all this while, having mixed with the soldiers for fear his brother should see him ; but when the torch fell into the pit, he gloriéd aloud and shouted ; he helped to fill in the earth, and trod upon it. The soldiers gathered up the arrows that had missed her, or had passed through her body, and returned, in moody silence, through the darkness of the night, to sleep. •

When the old duke heard that his son was dispatched, his heart became again a father's ; and, from seeking to justify the sudden shedding of his son's blood, he questioned the cause, and was cruel to himself that he had not let him live some time to repent ; so that his eyes were swollen, and his mouth sharp with the misery of acute thoughts

All the city pitied Claude : from the tenor of his past life they could not hate him. •So closely is honesty allied to the feelings of the human heart, and so deep an abstract impression does the good life of one make upon the minds of many, that there will exist an acknowledgment beyond all circumstances.

Theodose, seeing the turn that things had taken, and that the duke by no means thanked him for his zeal, but was silent, became suddenly sick. He affected such great sorrow for his brother, that it awoke the old duke's feeling for him ; who, viewing all that had been done as through filial love to him, and for his benefit, went to the room of Theodose, embraced him, and, as well as he could, comforted him, talking much morality and wisdom to him, which proved vastly entertaining. But the secret spring of these high tones in Theodose was the visible decline of the duke, by reason of the great grief

and fret of mind that he suffered ; for Theodose took care at all times to perplex him secretly about what had passed, and to add to the gloom of his mind.

In this train did the mole work, when Sebastian was recalled from Burgundy. The brothers had not met since children, and by this time had forgotten each other. When he arrived, and they had come into each other's presence, Theodose felt, by some kind of antipathy, uneasy, although he could find no reasonable cause for it, as Sebastian was younger, and could not cross him, while he could take his life or liberty at any time.

They were, in countenance and person, as like as two peas, except that the lines in Theodose's face were deeper, his forehead more imposing, and his person somewhat stronger knit. It is natural to suppose they had some mind in common, and so it was ; for subtilty and villany now began to stir and work in both minds, like a nest of snakes.

Sebastian came to his father's dukedom, determined within one year to be duke, having sworn it ; wearing in secret a golden crown. He dwelt upon this phantasy with fierce determination, and his young and fiery ambition sought nothing but the means.

As a wizard sitteth at a moonlight casement by a magic torch, knitting a vexed brow, and sweating at the discovery of some webbed problem of enchantment, so Theodose set hungrily to work to discover Sebastian's true character. He was one who could not work in vain, for each breath he drew was on his forecast success ; and to have failed, would have been to have split himself with his own spleen.

Thus, a devil can be admirable for something. His inveteracy of purpose was in its depth Satanic, as a saint's is Jehovian. It is this that lights on genius ; it is this that, like the vast world, changes but once, and in its change destroys itself ; it is this that knows no inexplorable darkness, no fear, no coldness, no alarm ; it is this that might make a man any thing, and has made all great men what they have been.

Theodose no sooner found his likeness in his brother, than he began to hate him, so that his fate was determined. He soon discovered that the impetuosity and rashness of Sebastian's mind was greater than his cunning ; though he had much of the last, yet he could not wait. Theodose, sounding the heights and depths of danger as he went, at once saw the use he might put his brother to, and soon lay upon a plan by

which he should sweep his way with honour to the ducal chair. He knew if he did not dispose of himself by some means, that Sebastian must dispose of him before he could arrive at his desires ; and he saw, in the affected sweetness of the proffered affection of Sebastian, hatred and sudden death.

So bethinking him, he took suddenly to his chamber, and put on the deepest grief for the deceased Claude. After some time, he committed mad and fantastic tricks, and affected insanity, and was pitied by every one. Being harmless, and apparently quite simple, he was suffered to range whither he would ; so that he went among the grooms and neat-herds, making no distinction between them and the great men of the court, and appearing to forget all state. At this Sebastian rejoiced ; and when Theodose saw that he no longer had a hawk's eye to him, he affected familiarity with him ; so that Sebastian, making sure of him, treated him as a jest, and would sometimes fetch him to make sport.

Sebastian now began to work rapidly ; affecting the cause of the people in all things. He entered the senate, and pleaded with much power and eloquence ; and, by open or secret means, caused many of the great men, the duke's good friends, to lose their power and fortunes.

Thus having gained some ground in men's minds, he turned an eager eye to the coronet, and bethought him of some easy and quiet way by which to let the old duke down into his grave. Now Theodose, having an eye to all his moves, approved of him as a good factor, and secretly, in his own mind, thanked him for the great trouble and commission of crime he had saved him

The old duke had a picture of his deceased wife, when in her youth and beauty; and having the tender feelings of nature about him, he prized it for the old recollections it inspired in his mind. Grey as he was, he would every night and every morning put his lips to this picture, and kiss it out of ancient affection. Sebastian, knowing this fact, bought from a monk an infusion of deadly poison, and stealing in the dead of night into his father's room, while he lay asleep, spilt it over the picture, and, having done his work, departed, but not unperceived; for Theodose, whose place was everywhere and nowhere (thus defeating all suspicion), seeing the doubts and fears in Sebastian's countenance for the day past, had guessed the reason, and had guessed aright; therefore he watched him night and day, and was at length satisfied. In the morning, the duke, not

forgetting his matter of feeling, took the infection, and died in great agony.

Now, when the tenth day of mourning was come, Theodose bethought him that his brother must not be crowned duke of Provence, and that therefore it was time his stratagem should ripen, besides, he could hardly feel safe from the jealousy of his brother, to whom nothing could confirm the crown absolutely but his death.

There was at the outskirts of the city (where the houses of the ancient nobility once stood, but now the site of a straggling farm) an old man, who lived by gathering simples in the fields and vallies hard by. He was very meagre, and in the poorest state; living in a shed that was built up against the ruins of a wall, once the wing of a banqueting hall of the palace of the former dukes, but now decayed and grown over with ivy and still weeds. Theodose, knowing of this man's poverty, determined to work upon it; so disguising himself as a monk, and taking with him a mixture in a phial, he went to him, and spoke after this manner: "Old man, a great fortune is fallen into my hand, and seeing thy meanness and poverty, I design, if thou wilt work thy part, that thou shalt partake of it. Thou knowest the state, through the old duke,

offered a thousand crowns to any who should cure his son of his infirmity of madness. I have shut me in a cave ever since, to labour to that end ; at last it is done. Behold this liquor ! it will restore him to his former sense in two hours. Hast thou the courage to proclaim thyself ? Wilt thou go through with this matter ? This potion will surely perform the miracle, and the gold is ours." The old man deliberated, having many scruples and fears ; but poverty was a giant to them all, and he engaged in it.

When the proclamation was made, Theodose caused himself to be carried to the man ; and he became sane, and took upon him his old habits, to the great mortification of Sebastian. Theodose gave it out that he should be crowned duke forthwith ; and somewhat fearing the long reach of his brother's treachery, prepared a snare for him ; and knowing he only waited an opportunity, affected habits of carelessness and indolence. Having first planted armed men in a summer-house in the garden, he walked with his brother there ; and when he left him, said, " Sebastian, the air is so hot that I shall take my night's rest in that house yonder." So saying, he left him, bidding him good night. In the dead of night, Sebastian crept all alone, past the bays and myrtles, with a naked sword in his hand.

Pausing at the door, he took from under his cloak a spade and an axe, and laid them beneath a tree ; and entering in, he crawled along to the foot of the couch where his brother lay. The signal was given, and the soldiers rushed out and seized him and bound him. At first his amazement was greatest, then his malice ; his eyes were opened, so that he beat his forehead, and cursed himself for a fool. Theodose ordered his crime to be published, and him to be cast into a dungeon ; smiling on him out of the depth of his satisfaction.

Something must now be said of the noble Claude, who so miraculously escaped from such hands. Having maintained his disguise, he went to Florence, which was then governed by a young prince, who was his great friend, and many courtesies had passed between them. Claude represented his state to him in private, telling him of his brother's treachery (of which he felt fully convinced) and his own credulity, and besought him to treat him honourably. Florence took him to his arms and entertained him, calling him by another name, and doing all things for his peace and comfort at once in a princely and friendly way.

The heart of Claude often ached at the fate of the unknown and mysterious stranger, who

had given him his liberty, and sacrificed his own life for it ; he longed to open the packet, but kept his word. When he heard of his father's death, he suspected some foul play ; and Florence, like a foreseeing friend, said, " Claude, thy dazzling honour has been too long clouded. I have ordered my officers to gather my armies together, and muster men to make up a strong force ; and we will case ourselves in iron, and go and demand thy birthright, not as a request, but as thy right."

After talking seriously of it, and agreeing upon it, they departed together ; dividing the army into two, and each taking his part. It happened that they arrived in Provence on the day when he might open the packet, but it was not yet evening. They went to the gates of the city, and, sounding the trumpet, the herald came to them, and they demanded to see the lord Theodose.

Now Theodose, when he had heard of this advancing army, and their hostile intent, thought it a fit time to be rid of Sebastian ; and, the event being uncertain, determined that he should not outlive him to glory in it. So taking two guards, he went down into the dungeon ; and, having told him of all his treacheries, ordered them to strangle him ; but he was stubborn and resisted,

so that Theodose fell upon him with the rest, and they together at length choked him.

Theodose went in furious mind to the battlements, and there talked with the prince of Florence, demanding the reason for this invasion. The prince answered, "To support the right, and to back this stranger who now stands armed before you." Theodose appealing to his brother, said, "Soldier, what would'st thou have of me? What injuries have I done thee?" For he was at a loss to think who this man could be, and though his mind glanced at Claude, he was so certain of having trod upon his grave, that it stood not within his stretch of belief that it was him.

And Claude said, "It matters not for what I hate thee. I do here challenge thee for a villain, a traitor, and a murderer; and as I would not slay thousands of thy people who are innocent, to be revenged upon so bloody a tyrant as thyself, I here challenge thee to single combat, arm against arm, to prove which of us God shall judge the true man. If thou descendest to fight with me, thou art a villain of some courage; if not, thou art a coward. And until the citizens give thee to our hands, we will beat the mad alarm of war about their ears, and mow them down by hosts." When Theodose

had considered of his unprepared state for battle, and the pressing ruin that was about him, he thought it best to accept the challenge, and giving his glove to his page, ordered him to cast it from the battlements, saying, "In an hour's time I will fight with thee."

When the time came and the lists were pitched, the trumpet of Claude sounded, and Theodose entered and answered to the challenge, gallantly armed, and followed by many horsemen. The fight began desperately, for the stake on both sides was a great one; but the wholesome life that Claude led, gave him a physical advantage over his antagonist, so that he was more powerful and had more self-possession, though he could not be more valiant. After some time Theodose bled from three wounds and became faint; but as his body weakened, his mind knit, and became more fierce and wilful. He flew at all advantages, and stood up like a battlement; though his wounds were numerous, his casque being knocked off, and his forehead cut across. He made a tremendous blow, gripping his sword with both hands, and struck Claude's helmet in two, so that he reeled back; but Theodose could take no advantage, for with the force of the blow his weapon had flown from his hands, and

he stood as one drunk. But when his wandering eyes settled on his brother's face, he spread his arms like a demon, and staggered forward with a face loaded with malice and wilful power (though masked in blood), and ran upon Claude's sword, raising up his heavy arms with out-spread hands, he stood as if invoking the demon of his incorrigible will, and drunk with his own blood, and stupefied with wounds, fell flat on his back, haggled and bloody, like a dog.

The people shouted when they knew the prince, and prepared to crown him the next day.

When night was come, and his wounds were dressed, he ordered the packet to be brought, and opening it, he there found the picture of Blanche, and the pathetic story of her love. Did he weep? Aye, a spring from that moment flowed in his heart, that welled its drops of sorrow through his eyes, not only until his beard was grey, but till the day of his death. He dwelt on her memory, he doated on the beauty of her countenance. She had melted his heart. He would have given a thousand dukedoms to have lived but in a wilderness with her. .

Her picture he wore in his bosom; and over the pit where she was buried he built a monument, and in it a vaulted room (where he loved

to linger) filled with sweetest flowers, and covered with young vines, in honour of her former way of life. Where she had lived, he built a mansion, and enriched her family and friends, and all whom she had loved. And though he some time after married the sister of his friend the prince of Florence, yet his spiritual essence was ever wandering with the tracks of Blanche upon the earth, dwelling on her picture, or enriching his deep fancy of her, in the gentle heavens.





CLARIBEL.

A TALE OF THE OLDEN TIME.¹

BOLESLAUS, King of Poland, had, of several children, only one surviving daughter, named Claribel. Being advanced in years, and his child of a marriageable age, he announced it to be his inclination to dispose of her hand to some prince of equal honour and distinction. This being spread abroad, together with the fame of her great nobleness of mind and personal beauty, caused many gallant youths to repair to his court, in the hope of succeeding in the lady's favour. The King seeing this, determined not to fetter her choice, but, after a reasonable time, called upon

¹ This story is not included in the "Stories after Nature." It was first published in "The Illustrated Magazine" for 1845.

her to select a husband from the noblemen who had offered themselves to her regard. She, however, answered them (and with good reason, as will hereafter appear,) not greatly to their satisfaction, for, after thanking them courteously for the honour intended her, and confessing herself free from all contempt and maiden pride, she told them that her affections were as untouched as on the day when they first appeared at her father's court, and that she had no preference for either of them, telling her father, at the same time, that, to whomsoever among them she might be given in marriage, he could not expect to receive her heart, and that, if she must be forced into so dreadful a position, she would leave it to the blindness of chance to determine to whom the sacrifice must be made.

Though this decision incensed the King, it perplexed him also, for he had no desire to provoke enmity in his guests, by sending them away without marrying his daughter to one of them; yet he felt well the force of her argument, and, that she might not be sacrificed unworthily, he gave command that the lists should be prepared on that day month, when any of those champions, who loved well enough to contend for the lady, might meet, and decide the right of possession by the sword.

Now, amongst the pages of Boleslaus was a young knight, whom, when a stripling, he had begged from the suite of his friend and ally the King of Denmark, being won by his fineness of countenance and grace of form. This youth was called Albert. During the progress of his service, he displayed a generous truthfulness of mind, coupled with a keen observation and ready wit, which gained him the perfect confidence of his sovereign; who, to reward his merit, knighted him in public, and kept him ever about his person, and in attendance on the Lady Claribel.

Nature will be nature in spite of rigid customs. True love is nature without fear. Its desires and resolutions are an overmatch for apprehension. It is fervid as the sun, mild as a cerulean sky, clear as the air, gentle as modesty, pure as the dew, or the earth-filtered water of the spring. Beautiful as a vision, and like one. Its pleasure lodges next door to agony. It is a tree to be shaken, but not rooted out, or it dies. It is an altar stained with the blood of hearts, and dedicated to Omnipotence. It subdues danger to its contempt. It has no shame. It is craving to luxury, and luxurious to waste. At disappointment, it breathes the air of charnel-houses; yea, even that which whistles through the teeth of Death himself! It is a flower. It dies with hope

and is invincible. It knows not the temporal masks of the world -- no blazoned pomp, no names in the registers of Kings (which are its foot-stool), nor on banners, nor on slabbed monuments, no vassalage; no buzz in bowing courts, no high seats, no preferments, no piles of gold, no princes, potentates or sphered powers, not even majesty itself!

Claribel loved Albert; for he was acknowledged in her secret soul the noblest creature in mind and body that had ever met her heart. And Albert loved Claribel for the selfsame sympathy. This is the election of the heart; but, alas! that such a choice should bring the sting of death with it!

Amongst the young princes now assembled at the court of Poland, was one named Casimir, the son of a neighbouring sovereign, who had from infancy spent much time in visits with the knights of Boleslaus. Notwithstanding the disparity of birth, from continual intimacy, and great mutual esteem, a profound friendship had grown between this young Prince and Albert, yet the latter had never divulged to him the secret of his affection for Claribel, nor had he learnt, till now, that Casimir also was in love with her, which greatly pained him.

All these circumstances much jarred the hap-

piness of the lovers, Albert and Claribel. They lived daily in each other's society, and ever in private hours called each other by the revered names of wife and husband, which, though ratified by no legal act, yet, flowing from the simplicity of their hearts, wiped away all censure from the inmost soul, and enabled them to smile upon each other clearly, with that honesty which is above the touch of shame or blight. But the time for deciding the fate of Claribel arrived, and found them in the utmost perplexity; both being resolved to sacrifice their lives rather than their faith.

On the morning appointed for the trial of prowess, at an early hour the King, with his daughter (bedecked by his desire so as best to adorn her beauty, and grace the splendour designed for her honour), took their canopied seats, the knights who had enrolled their names passing before them, and exchanging courtesies, each one vying with his fellows in rich equipments, and all full of pride.

Albert smiled to see them, in turn, kiss the lady's hand; but spleen and grief contended within him as Casimir, approaching, sunk on his knees like one who meets the Cross in a wilderness! He held her hand in his, as though it had been pearls, and covered it with caresses; a bee

could not more rejoice over a flower, nor gather honey with deeper luxury, than he did kisses. The lady was in agony ; her delicacy was pained, and she grieved that she was fair. She would have withdrawn her hand, but was ashamed at feeling it to be in her power to check the nobleness of his passion. He, having joyed his fill, arose, fit to contend with Fate itself, he was as one who is about to do that deed which had been the secret of his breast for many, many years. Patience had long watered the fierceness of his zeal, he was no idle opposer, no sudden fancier ; but one old in faith and hope. He had never before had an opportunity to show his love for the Princess : and she had always kept him at so great a distance, that he had not till now tasted the luxury of that white hand, he lost himself in delight, insomuch that the multitude were dumb with sympathy, and no thought of rudeness entered their minds. Had his antagonists been philosophers, they would have feared him. There was a steadiness in his eye, as in the angel's who poises the sun to run his daily course. Fate sat on his lip, and he breathed inward, as one who has business of life and death in hand. His ardour slumbered like a leviathan. The helmet he wore was crested by a stooping eagle ; and there was a ponderous firmness of expression in

putting it on his head, which seemed to say, "He who would remove *this*, must choose a thunder-bolt from the old artillery of Vulcan." His walk was like one who strides over graves. When his sword came forth, the robes of Fury might be heard to rustle in the wind. He slew the first, the second. Death, at his elbow, like a trembling mist, eager to snatch, bated his thrusts. Finally he slew the longest livers in the lists, and yet had breath to spare. Those who had not yet had trial withdrew from the lists, and he was left conqueror of the field. Boleslaus led him to the Princess, whom he tenderly embraced, and he seated himself beside her as one at length admitted through his worth. Yet he began with her as a simple lover, was kind and full of feeling, but without pride.

On the evening of this day Claribel and Albert walked in the shady gardens of the palace, as was their wont. They discoursed of the heavy perplexity which entangled them, and sought to devise some way of escape. Albert, with voice of deep grief, said, "It likes me not to deal death to one of so noble a nature; yet one of us two must die!"

"Alas! my love," replied Claribel, "I know not what to do. I prythee let us counsel; and, if a sacrifice must be made to bring us out of this

woful plight, let it fall on ourselves, rather than shake down more happiness, so that it touch us not to separation. I know not what to urge to my father in extenuation of delay, or refusal to this marriage. Casimir uses my lips at his discretion, and loses his hand in my hair. I can only be silent and sorrowful, at which my father chides. My dearest lord, what is to be done?"

Albert was too much a lover to be charmed with the innocent confession of Claribel, nor did it go far to quench the jealousy his bosom already harboured against his friend. He replied, "Something must, indeed, be done, and that of a decisive nature. Though Casimir has conquered these poor swordsmen, and comes to thee a crowned knight, yet would I fast from food and the sight of thee three days, and beat him after! By Heaven! my blood courses in as noble a tide as his---as royal a one. Mine eye doth front his brow, and therein I forget his royal blood, it is the succession of *chance*, merely; and *chance*, that brought his saucy lips so near thy precious hand, may bring his sable head to roll against thy foot! For every seizure on thy unproffeted lips, I will have drops of blood; or, let him leave me, and travel for his peace of mind. I am proud as the sons of emperors, possessing thy dear love, and

will brook no equality ! Let him look to it. I'll use him nobly, but it *must be fatally !*"

Claribel took his hand between hers, and, looking up in his face, said, "And are, my husband, the leaves of friendship so soon blown down by a splentific gust?—its blossoms, that have scented thy daily pleasure for many years, thus given to the wind? It is a thing to make love shudder. And, indeed, it is an ill compliment to me, to let the poor ape, *jealousy*, meddle in your noble thoughts. Yet, my dearest lord, though friendship be dead and buried, we are both bound to Casimir as a gentleman ; for there is a tone of delicacy through all his treatment of me, which *alone* should allay this gust of passion. Let us govern ourselves in this sad affair, if not altogether with discretion, at least with honourable humanity."

Kissing her, Albert, in a subdued voice, replied, "To acknowledge thy gentleness, is also to confess my weakness ; therefore, I will say nothing ; only that I will study how to meet this affair so as to keep my honour clear, and yet to secure us from this tide of dangerous circumstance that is set in against us. At the very worst, they can destroy our affection only with our lives !"

The next day was the one appointed for the marriage. Casimir, arrayed in armour, the same

which he had worn on the previous occasion, for thus the King had ordered (that he might wed the lady in the same habit in which he had so bravely won her), was advancing from the portal of his palace to join the gorgeous retinue that would attend him to the ceremonial. A messenger, in eager haste, clad in the livery of the court, pressed to his side, and placed a dispatch within his hand, upon the reading of which, Casimir hastily prayed his noble friends for a short period to delay, in which time he would rejoin them in their joyous progress, and, spurring his steed, rode off alone, as entreated by Albert, in the letter, to an adjacent forest, where Albert, fully armed, awaited him. They alighted from their horses, and Albert saluted him in a thick, hoarse voice, "It is fit that we should embrace thus, in armour, that our iron shoulders should grate each other; that these plates should admit no kindly warmth from our fraternal breasts. List! now our heads are stooped in courtesy, how the golden eagle on thy helm bickers the burnished dragon upon mine. Oh! it is ominous."

And Casimir replied, "This is so unlike the open manner of thy usual speech, that I cannot wonder I understand thee not. Were I woman, I might fear! If thou hast anything to unfold to

me. I prythee tell it me forthwith, for that sweet angel kneeleth at the altar, waiting to be my wife. The thought is elysium! Why didst thou send for me?"

"Listen, and hear enough. To tell thee that Friendship is a potent, fine, and heavenly spirit, till it be crossed in love; and then it plays the madman, tearing, in his ungoverned fury, those whom erst he cherished dearest. To tell thee that sweet angel, kneeling at the altar, is never to be *thine*! Two claimants must precede thee—myself and Death. I may stumble, but, out, alas! the last is sure; for the shades of death are sweeter haunts to true lovers than a solitary life, or fulsome change, with a grave at the end. On Love's wings they have flown the circuit of the earth, and seen therein but one object each, the other. Therefore, hope not, for they more condemn the world than it can them: they turn their backs on it, and walk into their grave, as to a pillowed bed! Therefore, again I say, bridle thy lion heart until it break. Do anything but *hope*. for 'tis the lightest vanity."

When Casimir had recovered from his surprise, he answered, "As yet, I but tamely meet thy overwhelming appeal, for, indeed, I cannot understand by it how one of thy birth and standing can presume thus to treat his noble friend: to

step in between the plighted hands of Prince and Princess—and to denounce the solemn decree of a royal king!"

"Open thy princely ears, then, and hear. Love is the sublimest sympathy of the inmost soul—it is an aching passion. Its food is sweet and subtle poison—much melancholy, wherein there is a melody and harmony beautiful, mending, profound. I have been praised for an eye: my forehead is well—I can stride with a prince, and grapple with a conqueror, yea, I have done so! When a page, my lord, it was my duty to tend the pleasure of my master and the sweet lady, my mistress, to watch their inclination, to furnish their desires, like a wakeful slave; and this I did, sir. I found my mistress with this same melancholy shroud about her youth, and she spoke of me as I have mentioned—not by word, no, no, but looks, sir—sweet ones. When I laughed, she was bland; when I sang, her eyes danced in splendour; when I sought the lists, she was sad, so I fought no more; when I was near, she would look upon me, when absent, her eye chid on my return, so that I kept ever near her; and, as I had long been combating a deep passion for her, fearing her high birth (as you have said, sir,) think on my joy to find her affection dropped suddenly on my breast like a

languishing dove ! 'To be brief, we are married, as far as vows and the laws of nature can make us ; whereby I claim that you observe that respect towards my wife as is meet from a knight and prince like yourself ; or else affront my honour at once, and let our swords decide our rights."

"Oh ! I am hurt to death, am tumbled head-long like Phaeton from his car, through my own ignorance ! Did I hope to see my affection gloriously crowned, and does it wear upon its head rue—thyme gone to seed—dead primroses—embattled holly—baneful weeds ? Off ! off ! they sting my brain !—My outraged heart rises in my throat and chokes me. Oh ! Claribel, Claribel ! have pity on the miserable, whom persecution drives to dotage. War, war !—I must make war for my revenge. My fury's hungry ; yet I'll not be so tame to strike myself, but dismiss the royal blood out of my assailing arm, and meet this common enemy."

"'Tis well," said Albert, advancing his shield, "this will please me most ; for I must have thine armour, and appear for thee, before the royal court, to wed the gentle lady as I ought. Come on ! I answer thy scornful challenge thus. Thy life is poor, but I must have thy coat, for which I'll hunt thee to the gates of death."

This broken converse was no relaxation of spleen in these sometime friends ; but the savage hiss before the mortal sting ! The struggle was indeed a mortal one : they heaved their arms about like waves ; the strokes echoed through the wood, into the dingle o'er the hill, and were lost in the heath. They couched like wild beasts, and were malicious in their aims. Their eyes rolled in the sockets, peering about for advantage ; and when they spied it, were fixed, staid. Judgment, nicety of discrimination, presence of mind, the keenest sense were theirs ; they almost scented opportunity.

But, whether Albert was more resolved than Casimir, or whether Casimir felt that the lady's heart fought against him (which was not in the lists), he drove on death himself, as a rugged bear to hug his enemy into oblivion. Then, anew, he was confident in hope, buoyant with desire ; anon, his gentle passion, his warm desire, maddened to spleen and vengeance ; and, though mad, he was most dangerous. Thus 'they struggled on till, for lack of breath, Casimir motioned Albert to pause, and they cast themselves in their own blood on the ground, weak, doubled up like children panting to death. As reanimation and strength returned, Albert opened his eyes, and, raising himself on his elbow,

presently got to his feet ; then, going to a spring hard by, he bathed his forehead, filled his helmet with the cool water, and drank freely ; a second time he filled it, and coming back to Casimir shook him, offering him to drink ; but he waved his head and would not, though greatly desiring it. Albert cast the water on the ground, and said, "Casimir, art thou too much wounded? Dost thou yield thyself vanquished?" Casimir shook his brooding spirit like an owl at twilight, till his harness rattled again ; then sprang upon his feet, and buckling on his helm, advanced his arm, waiting till Albert was prepared. Refreshed in body, though more wrathful in mind, again they assailed each other. They now fought steadily, sure, determined, and with all their violence : each blow was almost annihilation, they moved gigantic ; their spirits brooded about their arms. Albert received a blow on his helmet that threw him to his knees ; but he arose sternly, and casting his shield above his head (at once to protect and shade him, for the sun was shining bravely), he knit his limbs into a firm position, and darted his sword forward into his enemy's side. In vain was the attempt evident to Casimir ; vain his endeavour to avoid it : it was the only fatal stroke that had reached its aim. Fate registered it while it was preparing : it was swift

as lightning, and mortal as that deadly shaft. Casimir fell, and rolled upon the ground. Albert's fury was spent; the sword dropped from his hand, and when Casimir shuddered violently, as though contending with death, Albert's hands hung powerless by his side, and the tender feelings of nature were busy about his heart. Even such weak creatures are we, and so does passion play with our humanities. Thus communed he with his subdued spirit:—"Is this the friend whom I have embraced so oft? Whose hand has grappled mine; whose bright applausive eye so oft has warmed my heart? This generous noble gentleman-- bloody, cold, wounded to death, mangled by this pernicious hand! Oh! Heaven. Is mortality but thy prime jest?" And going to him, he took off his helmet, unarmed him, and would have stopped the wound; but Casimir would not suffer this: he took Albert by the hand, shook it kindly, and said, "I pray thee, despatch me; for then reflection will die also!" Albert's heart bounded at the friendly touch of that hand; he began afresh to bind his wounds; and, taking him in his arms, carried him to the shade of a tree, laying him down on a flowery bank. Casimir's anguish found utterance in words; and, bending his head into his bosom, he said, "Farewell, the budding April, and the

leafy May, the full-flowering June ; the eagled banner, knightly renown- friendship, affection, all earthly ties — ye are for me no more ! ' This morning's hope, but two hours gone by, saw me in the fresh breath of youth, ready to leap into a royal seat, and take for my own that loved one who swayed my destiny ! Behold me now ! down in the dust, soiled, maimed, and dying ! ' Albert said naught, but his tears flowed apace. Casimir looked tenderly upon him, and continued, " I blame thee not ; therefore (though it breaks my heart to say it), be cheerful, and enjoy thy good fortune. We could not both occupy one noble sphere, and—shame to say it—thou hast won it of me every way ! I pray thee, for charity, finish this work, and despatch me out of misery ! ' "

Albert essayed to speak, but knew not what to say, for, alas ! he could give no comfort, therefore he shrouded himself in his mantle, and crouched beside him in mute grief. Casimir thought of the lady whom he was about to leave for ever ; and in a burst of agony the bitter tears fell from his eyes, drenching his bosom in a shower of woe ! He moaned her dear name, " Claribel ! Claribel ! " then, as if nature could endure no longer, he braced his arms about his breast with a wild burst of strength, confined

his breathing as long as power could hold, then, suddenly relaxing his grasp, he drew in so long a breath that it killed him by bursting his heart.

Albert arose, covered the body with the branches of a tree, then, returning to the spring, washed away the bloody traces of his savage work, and sat beside the stream till the cool air had somewhat refreshed him. Then, gathering his remaining energies, arrayed himself in the rich armour of his gone friend, and, taking horse, led the retinue of Casimir to the court, and stood beside Claribel at the altar. She, thinking it to be Casimir, broke into an ecstasy of despair, amazing the King and the whole court, for she cried out, "Oh Albert! where, where art thou? Dost thou desert me at this last moment? Where is thy promised comfort—thy deliverance?—Hast thou, oh! too cruel destiny! fallen a sacrifice in the attempt? I have none to trust to now but Death; and yet he sees me thus, and will take no pity on me! Alas! my husband, where art thou?"

Albert saw that all was over, and that he could now do nought but trust to Fate; so, drawing his sword, he threw it on the ground before the King, and taking off his helmet, showed himself to be Albert. Claribel trembled, seeing the mischief she had brought about; then, drawing

herself closely to Albert's side, she leaned upon his arm, saying, "Your fate is mine."

The King was wild with amazement; but at length, turning his head from the lovers, he muttered irefully, "Speak, thou base catiff! speak, thou hast made my dignity look pale, to see *her* there, who was once my daughter, cling to thy groom's arms. Speak, and with thy bitter words shatter my throne, cast shame upon my regal crown; and cover my old head with grief! Hast thou beguiled that poor fool of her princely name, and now, in dauntless impudence, with one foot on my throne, standest thou forth to justify? Thou shalt be scourged, be sure. But no, not yet. Perhaps her honour is spared! Thou hast been her glorious champion in some secret danger that we slept over, dreaming not of it! Say but 'Ay,' I'll halve my crown with thee! Speak—is't not so?"

"Not ay, my lord, but no!"

"Oh! Oh! the slave has murdered me through the ears! My shame, like a reckless wanton, plays antic tricks before the public gaze! what shall I do, my friends and nobles? You see all this. Look to your children. Use whips, not kisses. A parent's curse on thee, thou pitiless child!"

As the cruel words broke from his harsh lips,

Claribel, in half embrace with Albert, together sunk to their knees at his feet, raised her head, and looking meekly into his face, murmured, "Mercy, my father! mercy!" And the King cried, "Leave, then, that villain's arms. Oh! fool, fool! repent thy foul offence! Art thou a Princess? Oh! vile, grovelling—dost hear?"

But Claribel wound her arms closely about the knees of Albert, who had risen to his feet, and protecting the guiltless victim tenderly, with undaunted voice, entered on his justification.

"My lord, I entreat thee, look on this matter as a father; as a man, not as a King. It is given thee to have the temporal sway over the lives and fortunes of millions! Such is the vocation of a King! 'Thou canst not rule the heart of one of those millions, save by humanity alone! Come, I beseech thee, down from the height and dignity of thy throne, and question of us who have fallen into thy displeasure, not with the tongue of vengeance, but such as thou wilt use when seasons have gone o'er thy head, and thou, in turn, shalt be questioned by the Book of Truth! when all thy glory will be dunned in oblivion, and it will be forgotten that thou wert ever a King! Judge of us, after such a manner as when the great angel shall call upon thee to answer of thy dealing between thee and me, as between

man and his fellow-man ! If thou deal justly by us, and with the feelings of an honest heart, as crowning thy best and kingliest deeds, it shall be remembered of thee, and cherubs will record it, smiling. But if thou dip'st thy hand in my blood—overlooking my excuse, and trifling with the mercy of thy soul—then, on that day wilt thou curse thyself for this sanguine crime, and wilt fain, with bitter tears, wash it from out the scroll of time. Have a care, then ; use not thy power remorselessly ! Now to my justification. How I was born into this world I know not, and as little care, for my only study has been (and will be, if I walk through the storm of this day) to be honest, as far as nature and passion will allow, in all dealings and mental affections with my fellows. It imports me not to seek after what credit I brought with me into this life, but jealously to care for what will go with me out of it ! Nature, which is greater than fortune, could have done no more for a Prince over twenty nations, than she did for me, in making me simple and true in mind and complete in person. She did well for thy daughter Claribel ; and we, knowing a daily sympathy in each other, forgot the difference of our estates, and fell into this misfortune. The fault, then, was Nature's—not ours ! And if thou revenge such a fault with deadly

punishment, how happens it thou hast no law to bind Nature from such acts, wherein we, who break no statute, yet suffer without mercy? That I have been honest and gracious in the sight of the world, witness your advancement of me to knighthood and the world's favour; both of which I hold most dear. Thus, be my birth what it may, I am a gentleman: a King's son can be nought more noble in the sight of Heaven.

"The Prince Casimir won thy daughter; he fought for her, he won her of men poor in desire—but she was my wife. Though he was also my friend, I fought with him as an enemy—I slew him fairly, and the friend's blood was spilt; which I would rather have spared from my own heart, but for this question of love. Thus, that I have used your daughter nobly, witness this act—the truth whereof lies bleeding in my heart; in sooth, but that she were the prize, I had rather my warlike arm had withered, than have dealt so deadly.

"When my friend was dead, I arrayed myself in his armour, though (the truth which ye all, my brave and noble hearers, can test by your own hearts,) weeping the while; and, in his semblance, came here, hoping to wed the lady with thy own royal consent, and leaving the rest to chance. But the alarm of her true affection

prevented the success, and here I stand, to live or die as thy will may sway ; although perfect in honesty, as any right and true gentleman now standing in this presence. 'Take my life—I will not sigh for it ; though to leave this dear lady would be full grief, I do acknowledge ; yet will I bear firmly as becomes my manhood, having, moreover, hopes beyond the limits of this world, and being so linked with fate that nothing can touch, either my love or my resolution. Thus powerfully armed, thy vengeance will be wasted, or recoil, through this bereaved one, on thy own self. For her—my sweet love and wife—I leave her to thy paternal bosom and the all-sufficient love of Heaven. I ask no mercy, seeing I have done no crime ; but, commending thee to thine own conscience, await my doom."

A pause of unbroken silence succeeded this appeal. The King's countenance gathered with foiled will and disgust, till it had become a map whereon men feared to look. Then suddenly he beckoned an attendant, and whispered him hurriedly. The messenger stood beside the doomed lovers ; and, addressing Albert, said, "Sir, I am commanded to desire you will follow me to death." Albert and Claribel looked upon each other, but spake not. Albert, advancing towards the King, bowed in obedience to his

command, then to the assembled court, a firm farewell, and was about to depart, but Claribel clung to his embrace, till the attendant said, "Madam, my orders are that this gentleman go alone." They looked upon each other once more in faith and fortitude inflexible, and, exchanging a kiss of such a soul-felt tenderness as spoke to all the gazers of the last touch of mortal sympathy, they parted, uttering not a word. Claribel watched his departure, and listened till she could hear his foot no more. Collecting all her fortitude, she advanced to the throne, and said, "Sir, if it so please, I would entreat to retire to my chamber." The King waved his hand. She motioned her attendants, and with a courteous though silent salutation, and much dignity, withdrew from the presence of the court.

Boleslaus sat absorbed ; the sweat oozed from his brow. Nature struggled fiercely with his false pride. Though he was resolved Albert should perish, he feared the calmness of his daughter forbode evil ; for, when despair assumes the dignity of patience, we may note well that it carries the warrant of death ! Her dying groan already rung in his ear. He sent to suspend the execution ; but the bearer of his mercy met an officer bringing the head of Albert to the King — calm and firm, as when quick with life.

Boleslaus was baffled and perplexed ; he knew not how to act. Anon, he sent for his daughter, thinking it better she should at once know the deadly ill. He pointed to the body of her dead lover, which by his subsequent order had been brought into the apartment, and, covering his grief and anxiety under a severity of tone and manner, rebuked her heavily for what she had done, twitting her with the meagerness of her filial love, and saying, "Thy behaviour hereafter must be such as by its merits to wash out this stain, and commend thee again to my tender regard."

To all this, Claribel said nought, nor turned her head, but stood the mute image of despair. She was alone in the world—most solitary : her face was in anguish, as though it could burst all over with tears ; but proudly she curbed her wretchedness, and shed none ; she disdained existence—her thoughts dwelt with oblivion, in the wilderness. She knelt down and kissed the dead eyes, lips and brow, and laid her hands upon his breast with gentle affection, as though he had but slept. Her face told how her spirit was yearning to be with him, tender as a mother hanging over her infant ; yet the embers of hope were dead within her eye. Nought could exceed the silent expression of her regard, or the

sacred manner in which she laid herself on his bosom.

The dumb court beheld the scene with a sympathy which forbade interference. The dignity of Nature had usurped their artificial respect for the King. In breathless abstraction they gazed for a long space on the unmovable lovers.

Boleslaus, unnoticed, descended from his royal seat, and essayed to raise his daughter—she was dead !





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